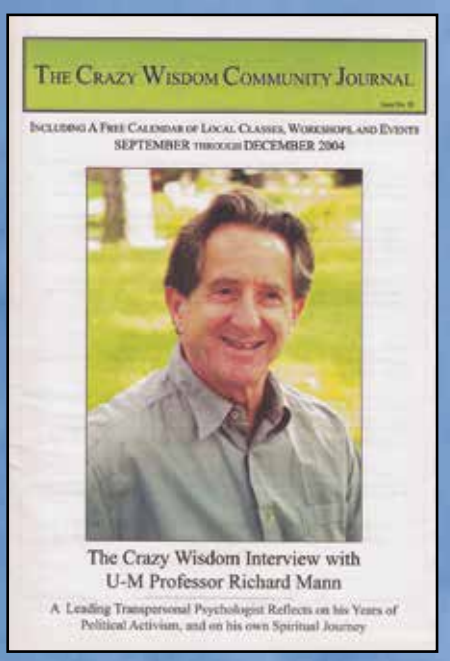
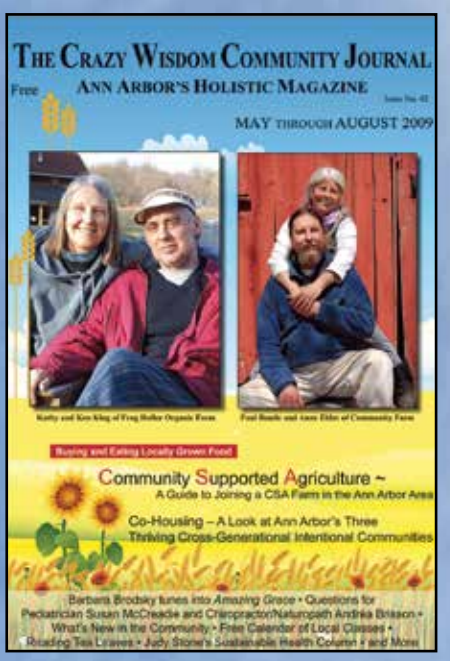
The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

Southeastern Michigan's Conscious Living Magazine

FREE — **September through December 2020 - Issue 75**

25th Anniversary Issue





Leading Lights from the Community (and from our previous covers) Came Together on the Eve of the Pandemic to Help Us Celebrate

From left to right: Bill Zirinsky, Linda Diane Feldt, Brian O'Donnell, Bronwen Gates, Lev Linkner, Cathy King, Haju Sunim, Richard Mann, Larissa Czuchnowsky and her son, Isaac Levey

Sandor Slomovits on the Legacy Land Conservancy •
The Grit Behind the Grange (Restaurant) • Hidden Gems: Green Spaces You Might Not Know About
• Yin Feminism • Sandy Finkel and Dennis Chernin on Stepping Out of their Comfort Zones •
Kintsugi and the Art of Mending the Broken Heart • Saved by the Squirrels
• Psychotherapist Marcia Haarer • Kokopelli's Corner • Conscious Parenting •
Great Tastes • Yoga Column • And More

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The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

Southeastern Michigan's Conscious Living Magazine

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— This issue will be posted on our website as of September 1, 2020 —

25 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

On the Cover

From left to right: Bill Zirinsky, Linda Diane Feldt, Brian O'Donnell, Bronwen Gates, Lev Linkner, Cathy King, Haju Sunim, Richard Mann, Larissa Czuchnowsky and her son, Isaac Levey

Cover Photo by Rachael Waring

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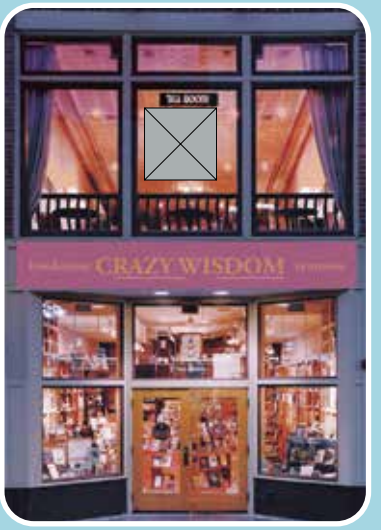
"Crazy Wisdom" is a term popularized by Chogyam Trungpa, one of the major figures in bringing Buddhism to the West. He described it as an innocent state of awareness that is wild and free, completely awake and fresh. It's a spiritual worldview that represents thinking outside the box — moving against the stream.



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Crazy Wisdom Bookstore
was founded in 1982.
Since 1989, it has been owned by Crazy Wisdom, Inc., which consists of Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter, husband-and-wife.

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This issue is distributed starting in the last week of August.

The deadline for Free Calendar submissions for the January through April 2021 issue is Monday, November 9, 2020

Contact calendarforms@crazywisdom.net

The deadline for Paid Advertising is Monday, November 23, 2020

Contact Tana@crazywisdom.net or Rory@crazywisdom.net

In mid-March, the pandemic halted everything! Michigan locked down; we couldn't publish an Anniversary Issue back in April. Wanting to create an online voice for the community during these months of uncertainty, we jump-started the *Crazy Wisdom Weekly e-zine*. Sign up for it at crazywisdomjournal.com.

We have also been busy posting locally focused content on Facebook, and at crazywisdomjournal.com, sending out e-Blasts to our 8,000 e-subscribers (subscribe at crazywisdom.net), and selling books online at shopcrazywisdom.com. We are now able to return to our seasonal rhythm.

As we go to press, Crazy Wisdom Bookstore is getting ready to re-open in late August, and we have begun calling our wonderful staff back to work.

Meet Some of our Creative Team

We sincerely appreciate all the talent that gets put to work to bring you the best *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* three times a year, and wanted to highlight different contributors from each issue in this space. Look for us to highlight some of our contributors in every issue.

Jennifer Carson is the managing editor for The Crazy Wisdom Journal, writes the hand crafting column, and contributes illustrations for each issue. She grew up in the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area until her parents moved west to Manchester in 1985. She spent twelve years on the east coast with her own family and was happy to return home in 2017. Jennifer holds a degree in creative writing and has published several children's books and numerous sewing and crafting patterns.

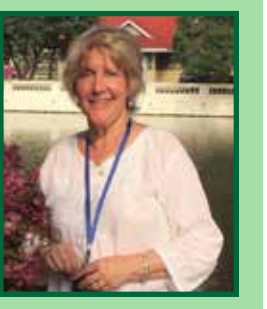
Ann Alvarez spent more than 45 years in community organizing and social work education. She was on faculty at Wayne State University, the University of Hawaii, and Eastern Michigan University. She is a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner (CHTP), and trained through Reiki 3 with Diane Stein. She enjoys combining her love of language, local community, and interesting people by working as an editor with the talented CWCJ authors.

Tana Dean is an Advertising Representative for the Crazy Wisdom Journal. Technology has been a part of her life since the 1980s and she has built websites since 2008. Her background includes being a musician, author, print salesperson, and entrepreneur. Serving on several boards of directors and as managing director for a local non-profit has developed her abilities to work as a team and support advertisers. She enjoys helping businesses reach out through marketing and advertising.

Catherine Carlson is a Michigan mermaid who returned to Ann Arbor with her family after many years living in Portland, OR and the Washington D.C. area. She has degrees in communications and writing and enjoys sewing, GF cooking, and browsing Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. She has been a lifelong student of metaphysics and is a practicing astrologer. Catherine writes book reviews for the Journal.

Joni Strickfaden has taken photographs for The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal for 15 years but has been in the photography business for nearly 40 years. She holds degrees in Architecture and Preservation and Urban Design. In her work as an architect she helps folks design and install solar panels. She loves taking environmental photos, as well as shooting portraits, weddings and events. Joni took the portraits of Erin Stohl and Dan DeSana for this issue. You can see more of her work at facebook.com/joni.strickfaden.

Mary Ellen Cain and her husband, Bob, have been delivering the Crazy Wisdom Journal to locations in Ann Arbor and neighboring communities for more than 5 years. Mary Ellen has also worked in the store as well, and even played a "gig" in the tearoom. She now spends her summer working at an inn on Lake Michigan and feels fortunate that she has always found life very worth living, even in these most trying of times.



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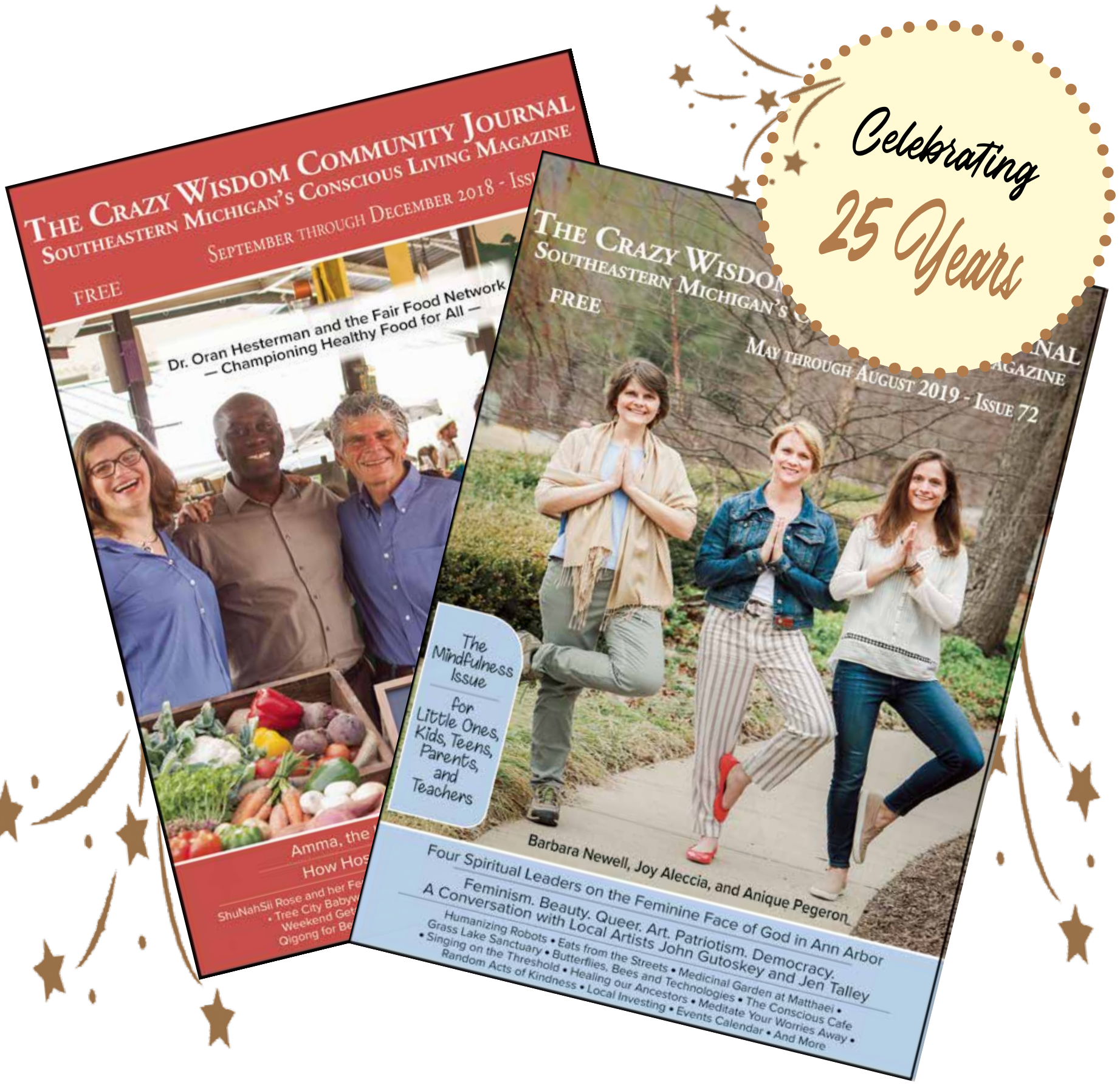


2020 marks 25 years that *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* has been in print. What an exciting and celebratory journey! What started out as a thin black-and-white publication focusing on holistically-oriented events in the area has grown into a 120+ page full-color regional magazine with glossy covers, and a vibrant freelance staff of writers, photographers, editors, illustrators, page designers, distribution helpers, calendar proofers, and ad salespeople.

On these four pages you will see 29 of our 75 covers over these 25 years. The covers have reflected our commitment to highlighting the richest array of conscious living thinkers and doers in this region, and covering local topics with depth and integrity.

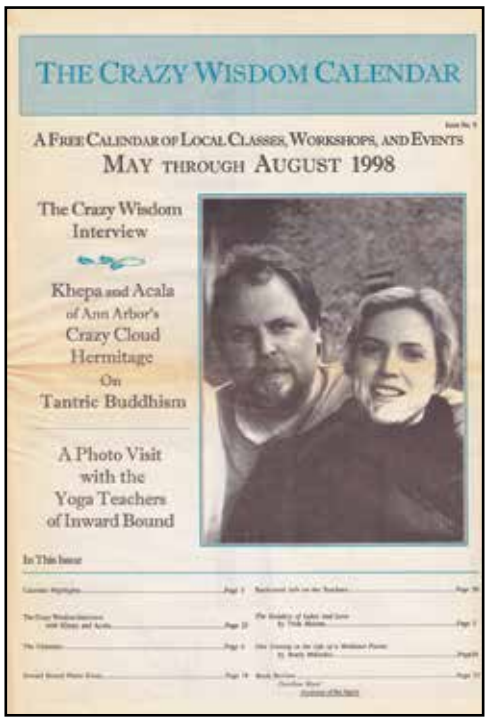
crazywisdomjournal.com

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal
A 25 Year Journey

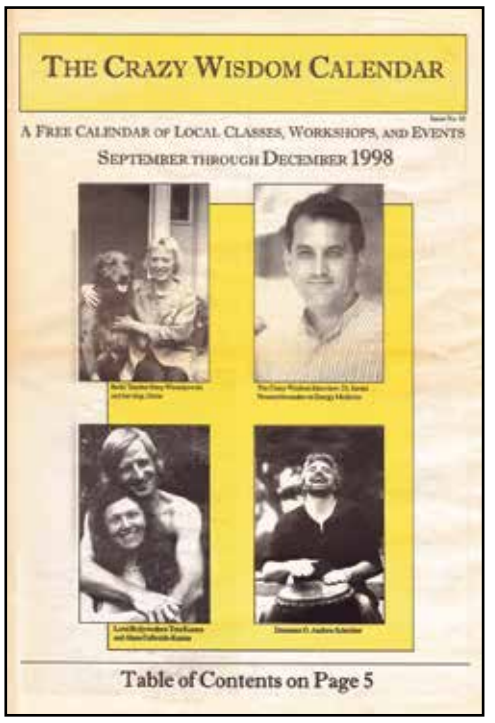
Issue #5 – 1997 -- Pathwork leader and Psychotherapist Brian O'Donnell

1997 -- Zen Priest Haju Sunim (aka Sukha Murray)

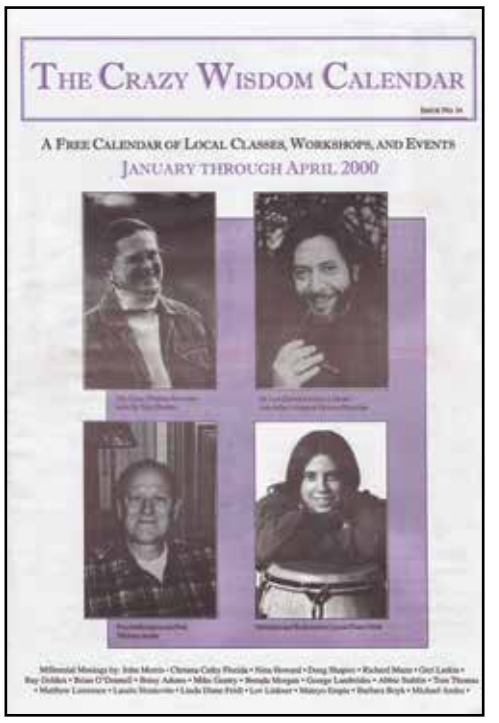
1998 – Herbalist Bronwen (Wildflower) Gates



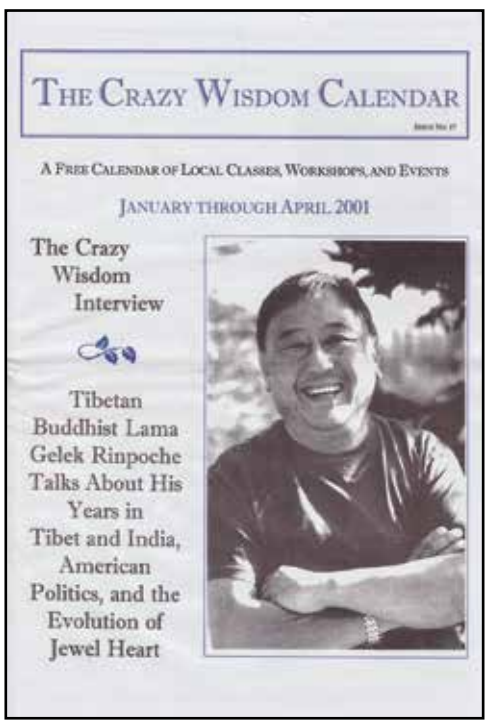
1999 – Traktung Rinpoche and Tsochen Khandro (aka Khepa and Acala)



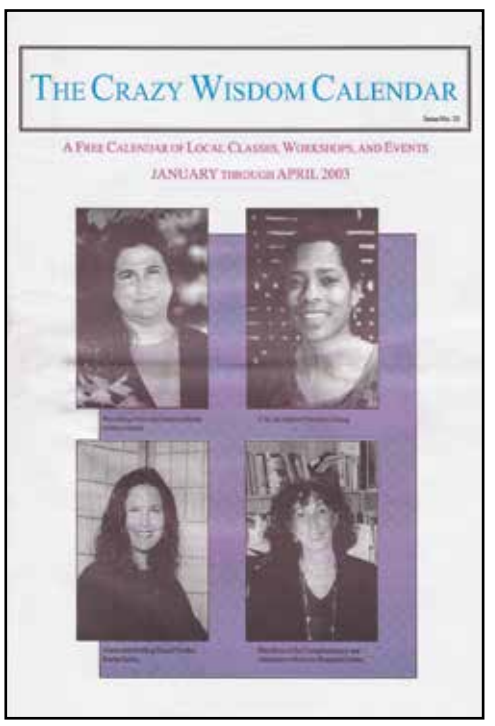
1999 – Dr. Jim Neuenschwander and Reiki Master Suzy Wienckowski, and others



Issue #14 – 2000 – Millennium Issue. Dr. Sara Warber, Dr. Lev Linkner, Michael Andes, Linda Feldt



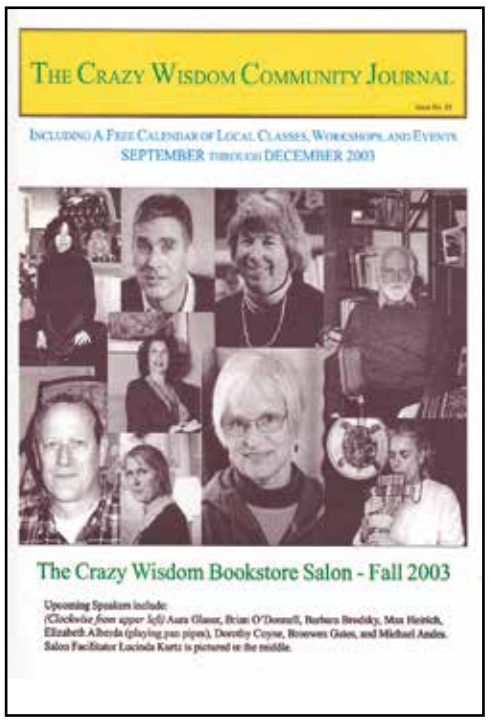
2001 – Gelek Rinpoche of Jewel Heart



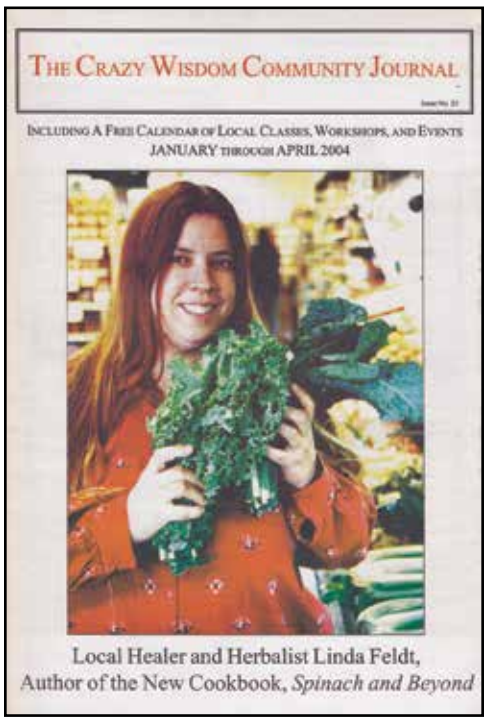
2003 – Norma Gentile, Wasentha Young, Karlta Zarley, Rita Benn

2003 – Gurudev Chitrabhanu, and Chetana Florida of the Lighthouse Center, the first color photos

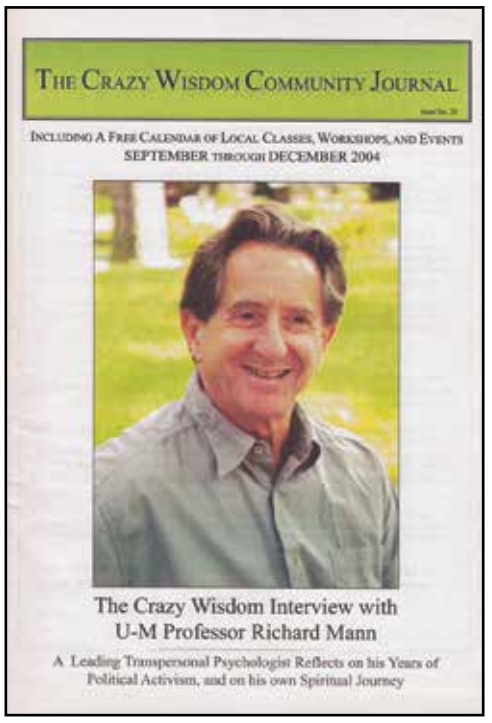
The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal
A 25 Year Journey



2003 – Crazy Wisdom Salons…Aura Glaser, Lucinda Kurtz, Barbara Brodsky, Max Heirich, and others

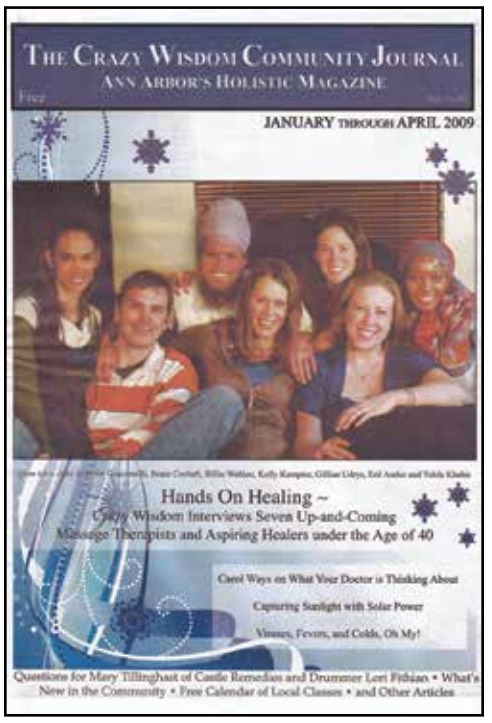


2004 – Herbalist and Author Linda Feldt



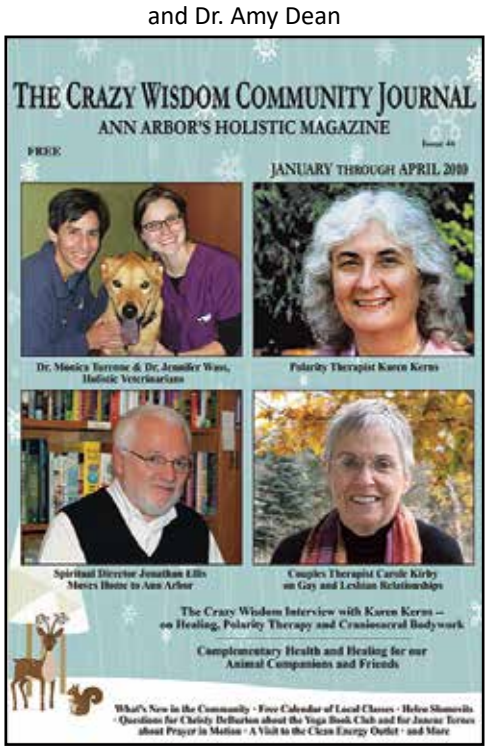
Issue #28 – 2004 – Transpersonal Psychologist and U-M Professor Richard Mann

2006 – The Next Generation of Holistic Physicians, including Dr. Malcolm Sickels and Dr. Amy Dean

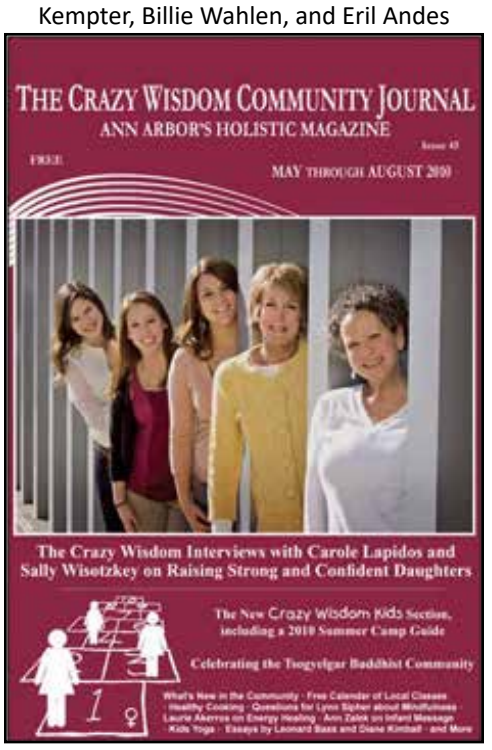


2009 – Up-and-Coming Massage Therapists Under the Age of 40 including Kelly Kempter, Billie Wahlen, and Eril Andes

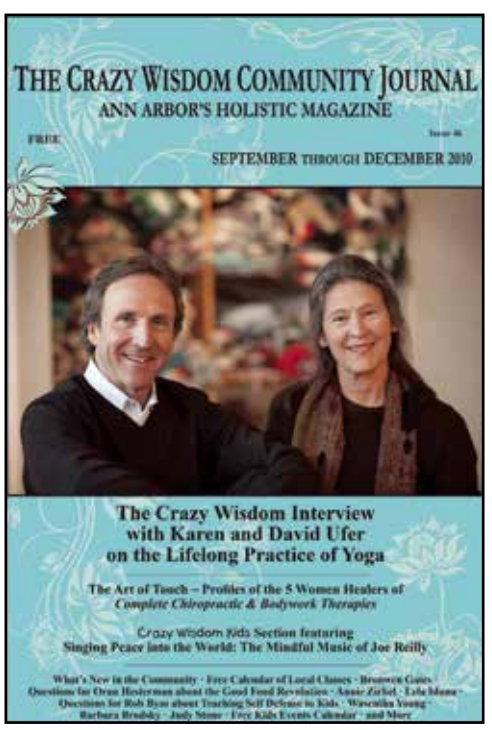
Issue #42 – 2009 – CSA Farmers Cathy and Ken King, and Annie Elder and Paul Bantle



2010 – Dr. Monica Turenne, Karen Kerns, Jonathan Ellis, and Carole Kirby

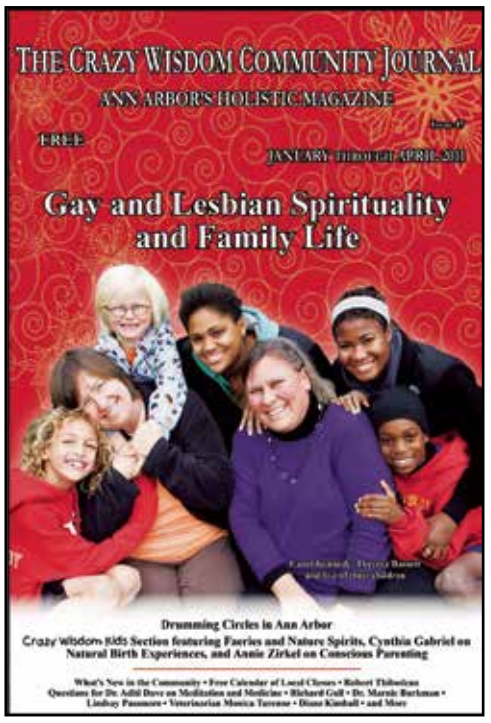


2010 – Raising Strong and Confident Daughters – Carole Lapidos and Sally Wisotzkey



2010 – Yoga teachers David and Karen Ufer

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal
A 25 Year Journey



2011 – Gay and Lesbian Spirituality and Family Life – Carol Kennedy and Theresa Bassett

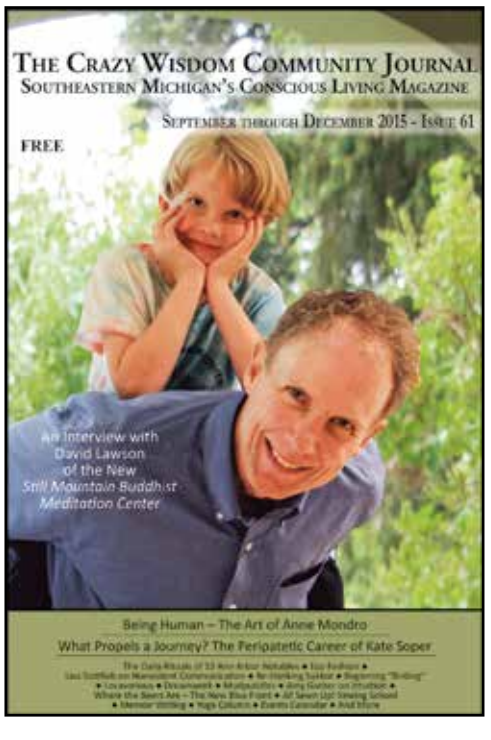
2011 – Acupuncture Comes of Age – Brodie Burris, Ellen Porter, Shan Kong, and others

Issue # 52 – 2012 – Blue Turtle Nature Program – Larissa Czuchnowsky and Frank Levey

2014 – Marian León of the Anthroposophical Society

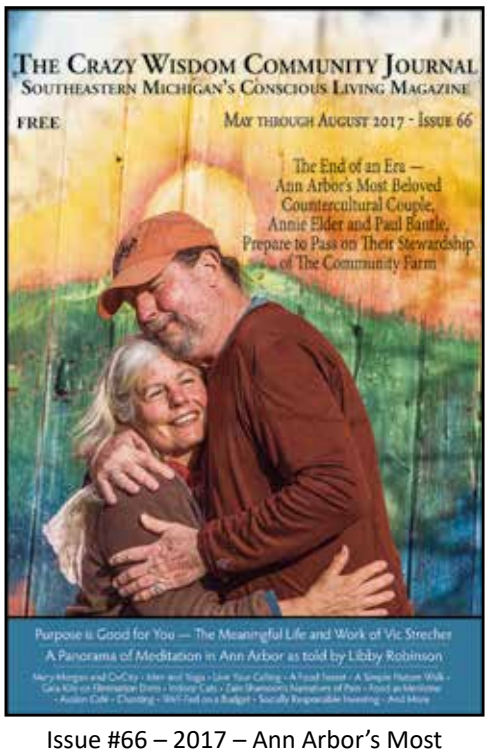
2014 – Cantor Annie Rose – Jewish Seeker

2015 – Haju Sunim and the Zen Buddhist Temple



2015 – Meditation Teacher David Lawson of Still Mountain

2016 – Empowering Girls and Young Women with Martial Arts



Issue #66 – 2017 – Ann Arbor's Most Beloved Countercultural Couple, Annie Elder and Paul Bantle

This (pandemic time) has been, and is, a necessary spiritual awakening for us all, whatever our circumstance.

— Bronwen Gates

For our 25th Anniversary Issue, we invited eight well-respected leaders in the regional conscious living community, all of whom have been on our cover before, to gather together for a cover photo shoot to help us celebrate. (Plus, since it was our anniversary issue, we asked our founder/publisher, too.)

It turned out to be on Thursday, March 12th, the eve of the national pandemic lockdown.

Thankfully, they are all well, and so we asked them to tell us what they have been up to since that fateful evening, and what they have been thinking about during these months of sheltering in place. Here are their answers…

Pandemic Q+A's for the Community Leaders on our Anniversary Cover

By Jennifer Carson and Bill Zirinsky
Photography by Rachael Waring

Editor's Note: We had intended to do a second photo shoot later in March, which would have included a second batch of the community's leading lights (again, people who had been on our cover before). And to have also assembled our staff for group photos for the anniversary issue. But the pandemic intervened, and it was not to be. Maybe we will do that for our winter issue!

Brian O'Donnell

Brian O'Donnell is a local psychotherapist and an international teacher in the Pathwork, a contemporary spiritual discipline that involves a highly articulated understanding of personal and collective evolution as well as practical methods for living these ideas day to day. He was on our first photographic cover in 1997.

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19? How have you handled this unique time in your life? Have you found yourself getting lonely, and if you have, how have you helped yourself to feel better? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

I'm a contemplative by nature so the solitude of the stay at home order is quite natural for me, and at times is a wonderful excuse to avoid social interaction. It has been hard for me to cease my traveling and also to let go of my playing sports. I've taken up running again after 25 years and it is a great way to rediscover Ann Arbor.

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming as an adult? Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

When I was a child, I longed to be a priest. In many ways I managed to realize this yearning in my own way. I'm privileged to teach about how to awaken to True Nature. I hear "confessions" all day, I assist clients to die to what no longer serves them, and to wed what has been waiting for unification.

—Brian O'Donnell

How do you see your work life changing as a result of this period in your life?

All my work suddenly shifted to an online format. This has been fine for my psychotherapy practice, yet my teaching work, I believe, suffers from the remoteness and the inability to dynamically "dance" with the online classes.

Have you indulged in any guilty pleasures while in quarantine? If yes, what?

My guilty pleasures are going for long walks and getting lost, chocolate, and Netflix at the end of the day.

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming as an adult? Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

When I was a child, I longed to be a priest. In many ways I managed to realize this yearning in my own way. I'm privileged to teach about how to awaken to True Nature. I hear "confessions" all day, I assist clients to die to what no longer serves them, and to wed what has been waiting for unification.

What inspired you to become a therapist?

I was inspired to become a therapist primarily through my first therapist and psychology professor at the University of Michigan, Gary Bron. His presence was life altering. He was a wonderful blend of penetrating insight and utter humanity. I felt immediately called to serve others in this same way.

What will have changed in your life permanently due to covid-19?

Nothing and everything!

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

I see this pandemic as a profound opportunity to dismantle personal and collective structures that aren't in alignment with the well-being of the Whole. Painful and unsettling for sure, yet a call to greater evolutionary possibilities. The more we resist, the more the pain, and the more we yield and learn, the more the expansion and freedom.

Haju Sunim

Reverend Haju Sunim has been at the local Zen Buddhist Temple since 1982, and its leader for 35 years, "always with significant help from many sincere-hearted, skillful, and spunky sangha members." She hails from Vancouver, and has two daughters, Karima and Komani. She's been on our cover three previous times over the decades.

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19?

I've been going out for a brisk daily walk in the very early morning followed by meditation in our local, Burns Park. I intend to continue these walks, weather permitting. Also, I have been doing a lot more cooking which I quite enjoy, and I have appreciated being in the garden more.

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Pandemic Q+A's for the Community Leaders

Continued from page 11

How have you handled this unique time in your life? Have you found yourself getting lonely, and if you have, how have you helped yourself to feel better? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

I live at the Zen Buddhist Temple with a few others. Together we have kept up a simple schedule of thrice daily meditation practice, sharing preparation of meals, renovation projects, landscaping, and growing vegetables. It's been a delight to build a chicken coop and have eight young chickens and a duck move in. We have been enjoying getting to know them. I personally enjoy regular Facetime and phone calls with my children and young grandchildren especially seeing how well they all have adapted to lockdown.

I guess it was hard to not have my regular doctor appointments for three months, but now I have taken them up again with mask and safe distancing. Also, I found it challenging to prepare my usual weekly dharma talks in response to the turbulence of the time. I realized I have much to learn about every issue that we are facing!

How do you see your work life changing because of this period in your life?

People have asked us to continue our online Sunday Services when we go back to in person services. The online services have allowed members and friends who have moved away to be back in regular touch. I am sharing my temple responsibilities more with younger ones.

Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

Well, I guess I did end up being a teacher but never dreamed at that time and that place, 1950's in Vancouver, British Columbia, that I would end up being a Buddhist priest in a Temple in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I hadn't even heard of the place or of such a vocation!

—Haju Sunim

Have you indulged in any guilty pleasures while in quarantine? If yes, what?

The occasional coconut chocolate ice cream fudge popsicle.

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming as an adult?

A schoolteacher.

What inspired you to become a Buddhist priest?

There wasn't a plan. One thing led to another, the priest here left, and I was asked to take on the duties. I said yes, not knowing in the least what I was getting into. It's been extraordinary!

Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

Well, I guess I did end up being a teacher but never dreamed at that time and that place, 1950's in Vancouver, British Columbia, that I would end up being a Buddhist priest in a Temple in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I had not even heard of the place or of such a vocation!

What will have permanently changed in your life due to covid-19?

I don't know. I'm watching.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

I think that this pandemic has been a catalyst for much social unrest in this country and culture and I hope the so-called chaos we have been experiencing is an important part of a process to nurture a deeply just society wherein all lives matter. I know it has prompted us to look at how we here at the temple are doing with this. And, again, I have been looking at myself in this regard more than ever. Upheaval!

I also have been very grateful and in awe of the courage, love, skill, loyalty, patience, creativity, generosity, and heroism of our human spirit from those on "front lines" everywhere! Here, a deep bow to those who have supported the temple in so many ways. And a bow to the nephew of one of our members who is a doctor for native peoples in Arizona who were really devastated by the virus. He and a fellow went to Hollywood to raise money for equipment because support was not coming from anywhere else. And they were successful! Ah, the inspiring stories!

Dr. Lev Linkner

Dr. Lev Linkner has been involved with Holistic Medicine for over 43 years. He has been in solo practice in Ann Arbor for the last 20 years in a Multidisciplinary Holistic Center. During his first year in medical school at the University of Michigan, he was a founding member of the Ann Arbor Peoples Free Clinic, where he began his interest in healing. A charter member of the American Holistic Medical Association since 1979, he has been on the board of trustees and served as the secretary. Since 1977 he is a clinical assistant professor, advisor, and researcher at the University of Michigan. He was on our cover for our Millennium issue in January 2000.

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19?

We have become better cooks and experimental chefs! Mostly vegetarian, gluten, and dairy free. YUMMY!

How do you see your work life changing as a result of this period in your life?

For over 40 years I have been excited to walk into my office. I breathe in and out love as I walk through the door. Being able to help folks and have a close personal relationship with multiple generations has been the beauty of my work (honestly, has never been work). Now I have to resort to telemedicine, emails, and phone calls. It is important to be available, but nowhere near the same. The value of human touch is missing. I can't wait to be a normal holistic doc again!

—Dr. Lev Linkner

How have you handled this unique time in your life? Have you found yourself getting lonely, and if you have, how have you helped yourself to feel better? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

We have five grown children and have been babysitting three days a week our two-year-old grandson who lives a few blocks from us. It has been a blast and a joy! I have not been lonely at all. Hanging with him has been a gift and delight. The hardest issue is missing the rest of the kids, their spouses, and other grandkids. We are a very close family going from each coast, and really miss the travel and time to be with them.

How do you see your work life changing as a result of this period in your life?

For over 40 years I have been excited to walk into my office. I breathe in and out love as I walk through the door. Being able to help folks and have a close personal relationship with multiple generations has been the beauty of my work (honestly, has never been work). Now I have to resort to telemedicine, emails, and phone calls. It is important to be available, but nowhere near the same. The value of human touch is missing. I can't wait to be a normal holistic doc again!

Have you indulged in any guilty pleasures while in quarantine? If yes, what?

No. My life is pretty stable that way.

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming as an adult?

An astronaut, a fireman, and president of the U.S.

What inspired you to become a physician?

My father was a doc, and he inspired me. We went on house calls together and he showed me how to love and respect all people. I believe that the art and science of medicine is fascinating, and serving others becomes a way of life.

Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

Yes. My wife and I have been married over 50 years, have a wonderful, loving, and close family. I enjoyed the old way of working, and plan to do that eventually until I am 102 years old. I dreamed of helping others, the planet, and making a difference!

What will have changed in your life permanently due to covid-19?

Hopefully just the memory of this weird and stressful time. I hope the politics will be changed for the better this November.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

Seeing the lies and hypocrisy that our government has shown are callous and causing many to die. I am worried that the human element of touch, caring, and community has been compromised. It has been profound that many are using technology to still try to be close and connected. Like the Grateful Dead song, *Touch of Gray*... I will get by, I will survive!

Larissa Czuchnowsky

Larissa Czuchnowsky is a schoolteacher at Forsythe Middle School, a meditation teacher, and Conscious Dying coach. She owns and runs Blue Turtle Nature Awareness Camp, which she founded with her late husband, Frank Levey. They were on the cover, with their then-7-year-old son, Isaac, in 2012.

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19?

I would say that the uncertainty of the times has inspired more flow and surrender in my life. The unpredictability and cancelation of plans created many practice opportunities for seeing that if I argued with reality, I suffered. Not a habit exactly but the practice of feeling my feelings and showing up to what reality brings, with openness and curiosity, definitely got practiced a lot.

What will have changed in your life permanently due to covid-19?

Well, my father passed away in a Canadian field hospital from COVID-related pneumonia. Luckily, we were able to be together by zoom for hours at a time. Using conscious dying principles, I was able to facilitate a beautiful and empowering journey for my Dad, myself, and my family. We did a lot of healing and forgiveness during those marathon sessions together.

—Larissa Czuchnowsky

How have you handled this unique time in your life? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

This time has been beyond busy for me. Working at home as a single mom and having my children present with their emotional and learning needs had me deeply looking at the ways I work. I saw where I easily got overwhelmed and unproductive and how to support myself with kindness and encouraging self-talk to get through. My favorite phrase was "You've got this!" I have learned to work with my natural rhythms, and I have so enjoyed not having to get up to an alarm clock and to be able move a little more slowly in the morning.

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Bronwen 'Wildflower' Gates, Ph.D.
Multidimensional Transformational Healer

How do you see your work life changing as a result of this period in your life?

With everyone's new familiarity with meeting online, it's supported the structure of the work I am doing as a conscious dying coach meeting with families from different parts of the country. In terms of camp, the disruption of my normal format brought in creative ideas and processes that I will continue with next year. The keepers have been the hammock village in the front of my property and the pool noodles used for socially distanced tag games.

Have you indulged in any guilty pleasures while in quarantine? If yes, what?

My biggest guilty pleasure is reading online articles when I should be doing something else. And, I really like the macadamia nut keto bites from Whole Foods.

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming as an adult?

As a child, I wanted to be a pediatrician and a mother because I loved children. I was also captivated by the arts and wanted to be a ballerina at one time. It's this love of young people that has inspired me to be a teacher and run a day camp presently. Coaching brings a lot of joy in creating a healing space for others.

What inspired you to become a conscious dying coach?

My late husband, with whom I started Blue Turtle Camp, gave me a huge gift in his illness and eventual death. A gift I would never want or ask for, but a gift, nonetheless. To watch him slowly move toward death without fear and then to die surrendered and open-hearted was incredibly life changing. We both decided to use his transition as an opportunity for spiritual growth and healing. The gifts of illness and death are often not utilized in our culture due to our anxiety and fear of loss, which leads to us missing out on what is available during such a fruitful and precious time.

Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

Yes. I am surrounded with children in my teaching and day camp positions and now, as a conscious dying and awakened living coach, I can offer healing opportunities to those seeking more awakeness and presence during a challenging period in their lives.

What will have changed in your life permanently due to covid-19?

Well, my father passed away in a Canadian field hospital from COVID-related pneumonia. Luckily, we were able to be together by zoom for hours at a time. Using conscious dying principles, I was able to facilitate a beautiful and empowering journey for my Dad, myself, and my family. We did a lot of healing and forgiveness during those marathon sessions together.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

I am most interested in how the unknown, fear, and anxiety intersect and the ways in which we give our power away when we are frightened. Also, as someone born in Canada, I am interested in the effects of national policy on health and well-being. Finally, it fascinates me to live in a time where consistent uncertainty has become an intimate part of life for all of us and how our resilience and heart are beckoned to lead us in this opportunity of re-formatting how we live together as a society.

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Pandemic Q+A's for the Community Leaders

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Cathy King

Cathy King started Frog Holler Farm with her husband, Ken King, in 1972 and has lived and worked there ever since. After Ken's passing, their three sons—Billy, Kenny, and Edwin King—have continued to grow organic produce at the farm, helped out by a changing array of enthusiastic and committed young people. The King Family also created and oversees Holler Fest—a farm, music, and arts festival in the Irish Hills, Michigan (45 minutes southwest of Ann Arbor). Now in its 13th year, the event takes place at Frog Holler. The goal of Holler Fest is to form sustainable relationships between artists and communities, food and consumers, the land and the people. She and Ken were on our cover in 2009, in a story on CSA's and organic farms in the area.

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19?

No, I'm fortunate to live and work on a beautiful piece of land and I stay home a lot anyway.

How have you handled this unique time in your life? Have you found yourself getting lonely, and if you have, how have you helped yourself to feel better? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

I'm also fortunate to live with my family and their partners and close friends. We have a solid farm crew that we see regularly and really appreciate. And we are very busy, so I have not been lonely and appreciate all of their dedication and company.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

Hopefully, we will not retreat from the realization of the wide disparity that has steadily and insidiously crept into our culture in the areas of justice, health care, income, and more, I'm sure. That inequality has been painfully highlighted during Covid-19 and the pandemic era. I hope we don't go back to comfortable normalcy and that our culture and country support leadership that is empathic, selfless, and humane.

—Cathy King

How do you see your work life changing as a result of this period in your life?

Not at all except I'm getting older!

Have you indulged in any guilty pleasures while in quarantine? If yes, what?

Not really—not that I'm a saint. Just busy. Okay—this is a guilty "not pleasure"—checking the news too often to see if anyone in the present government has come to their senses yet. Not hopeful.

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming as an adult?

I dreamed of being a veterinarian and then a dancer.

What inspired you to become an organic grower?

"The sixties" and the vision and determination of my late husband, Ken King.

Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

I am still an animal lover and live on land that was bought from the Gesells, who worked for more humane treatment of animals in research, and whose daughter started the Animal Welfare Institute. I feel an obligation to their legacy and I also care for our spoiled little flock of laying hens and farm pets. And I'm fortunate to be able to dance to my son's and many talented musicians' music at local venues and at our music festival, Holler Fest, (now cancelled until 2021).

What will have changed in your life permanently due to covid-19?

Still waiting to find out.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

Hopefully we will not retreat from the realization of the wide disparity that has steadily and insidiously crept into our culture in the areas of justice, health care, income, and more, I'm sure. That inequality has been painfully highlighted during Covid-19 and the pandemic era. I hope we don't go back to comfortable normalcy and that our culture and country support leadership that is empathic, selfless, and humane.

Linda Diane Feldt

Linda Diane Feldt is a Holistic Health Practitioner, writer, and teacher. Her primary work is with Cranialsacral Therapy, Polarity Therapy, Herbology, and massage. A student of the healing arts since 1973, she has had a local private practice beginning in 1980. She has worked on the national level as past President of the American Polarity Therapy Association, and as a board member of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork. Her current focus is working with new moms and babies who have nursing difficulties or birth trauma. She has been on the cover twice over the years, one of which was to celebrate the publication of her third book, Spinach and Beyond.

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19?

I'm one of those triple-at-risk people who was already laying low before the stay at home order. That will continue. It appears that I had the virus in February so I'm still recovering from that, as I also appear to be one of the rare few who are taking months or longer to stop having symptoms. I have no new habits, just coping every day with a complex medical picture and staging symptoms. I do have more gratitude than ever just to be alive and usually functional. I hope that will continue and expand as well!

How have you handled this unique time in your life? Have you found yourself getting lonely, and if you have, how have you helped yourself to feel better? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

I am a social extrovert. And I love my work with clients, so that has been very hard. I'm also a relative newlywed and my husband has been a rock and a solid ally in getting through this. I am profoundly grateful for his support and love. I've learned and practiced a lot of asking for (and accepting) his help. It's pretty amazing.

How do you see your work life changing as a result of this period in your life?

Right now, I am working less than I was, which was already curtailed due to my other health issues. I am interested in formalizing, doing more mentoring, and supervision for people in the health care field, especially those doing bodywork and herbology. That would be a nice way to share some of the wisdom I have from a successful practice of more than 30 years.

Have you indulged in any guilty pleasures while in quarantine? If yes, what?

Sleeping. More sleeping. But I'm told this is also essential for post-covid recovery. Having more time for cooking and baking has been lovely. But I have no guilt around that! I have some residual guilt about all I ask my husband to do for me, but I'm working on it and we talk about it a lot

How have you handled this unique time in your life? Have you found yourself getting lonely, and if you have, how have you helped yourself to feel better? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

I am a social extrovert. And I love my work with clients, so that has been very hard. I'm also a relative newlywed and my husband has been a rock and a solid ally in getting through this. I am profoundly grateful for his support and love. I've learned and practiced a lot of asking for (and accepting) his help. It is pretty amazing.

—Linda Diane Feldt

What inspired you to become a holistic health practitioner?

I had imagined I would go into public policy or advocacy work, especially political activity. When I started doing direct services at Ozone House, and practicing massage therapy, I realized it was much more impactful and also fulfilling. That's the simple answer.

Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

I wanted to be a teacher, a writer, an advisor to major politicians, and an environmentalist. I think I've figured out a way to have all of that and more.

What will have changed in your life permanently due to covid-19?

I'm concerned that having the virus may have created some negative permanent change, like so many viruses do. Social activity, having dinner parties, small changes. But there is also a shift in the world in general being more vulnerable and having had this time to take stock and reset.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

It's too early to tell. There are some interesting changes in family dynamics, in political awareness, in personal health. It's hard to know how this will all come together and how it will play out. But the world is a bit more surreal and there are possibilities.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

The dynamism of equality-consciousness and the actions that express this will at least create a new highwater mark. So many essential people, it turns out. Others will follow. The tipping point is out there somewhere.

—Professor Emeritus Richard Mann

Richard Mann

Richard Mann is a Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Michigan, where he taught for more than 50 years about group process, psychology and religion, and spiritual development. He was the founder of Project Outreach, an ongoing experiential Psychology program at the University. He has written three books, Interpersonal Styles and Group Development, The College Classroom, *and* The Light of Consciousness. He has also been involved for many years with Siddha Yoga, and been a leading light in the field of transpersonal psychology. He was on our cover in 2004.

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19?

I would like to stay committed to an early morning practice of chanting the Guru Gita. It produces a huge picture moment that lasts well into the day. A huge picture that reveals the enormity of the human condition and the not exactly unique degree of distress this virus has induced. We are all one.

How have you handled this unique time in your life? Have you found yourself getting lonely, and if you have, how have you helped yourself to feel better? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

I don't feel lonely. I had already transitioned from the decades of hanging out with class after class, individual after individual, into my version of being something like the forest dweller. I might have a honey-do list to attend to some days. I might focus on writing down the thoughts I now have time to nurture. But the blessing is there in the unbounded moment that arrives without warning.

How do you see your work life changing as a result of this period in your life?

Steady as she goes. Retirement is delicious.

Have you indulged in any guilty pleasures while in quarantine? If yes, what?

No.

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming as an adult?

My cover story was to be a lawyer, but beneath that device I had hardly any notion of what I would "become."

What inspired you to become a psychologist?

The joy of finding a stance to adopt, a reference point derived from social science. For one thing it provided the best vehicle I could imagine and gave me some leverage against the barrage of hide-bound opinions and conventional injunctions that ruled every dinner table conversation.

Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

I did achieve some mastery of the field of psychology, but to my surprise that one-up angle on college teaching became far less engaging than deepening the immediate contact with students as fellow explorers.

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19?

I would like to stay committed to an early morning practice of chanting the Guru Gita. It produces a huge picture moment that lasts well into the day. A huge picture that reveals the enormity of the human condition and the not exactly unique degree of distress this virus has induced. We are all one.

—Professor Emeritus Richard Mann

What will have changed in your life permanently due to covid-19?

I can't think of anything I will ascribe to it five or ten years from now, or even five or ten months.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

The dynamism of equality-consciousness and the actions that express this will at least create a new highwater mark. So many essential people, it turns out. Others will follow. The tipping point is out there somewhere.

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Pandemic Q+A's for the Community Leaders

Continued from page 15

Bronwen Gates

Bronwen 'Wildflower' Gates, Ph.D., is an ethnobotanist, shamanic herbalist, and multidimensional transformational healer by training and avocation, and co-creator with Faerie of the Faerie Flowers Essences. As a spiritual midwife, her mission is to "help you remember and be reborn into ever increasing intimacy with your Essence Self, to Come Home to the Goddess." Her "skills and gifts are in service of [her] determination to end the domination paradigm, to restore access to Women's Mysteries, and to Mystery, to co-creating a partnership paradigm with Nature, with each other, and with the Divine that is our evolutionary directive." She was interviewed in-depth for a cover story in 1998 and was again on our cover in 2003.

During this quarantine time you haven't been able to see clients or friends or family face-to-face. How are you filling your days?

'Experimental' cooking using the contents of my fridge and my cupboards. Gardening. Slowing down and taking leisurely walks in my neighborhood and parks to savor details and delights I had not noticed before. Some long overdue deep cleaning. Decluttering—liberating myself by re-imagining items as gifts awaiting dispersal. Reading voraciously, and even watching a few movies!

When you find yourself feeling blue and isolated from friends and everyday chit chat, what do you do to feel better?

First, I use acupressure tapping and see what flower essences might be calling me, then I sing, I dance, I wiggle, I clown around and laugh at my silliness *to get* my joy motor going. If that isn't sufficient, I focus on being present to what I am feeling that is impeding my joy, and the thoughts that accompany this feeling, and then use whatever works—tapping, flower essences, other energy healing, forgiveness, breathing – to restore *my* balance. Or I go outside and revel with delight and gratitude in the beauty of nature and the magic of plants. There is beauty everywhere. Always works.

What daily habit have you changed that you would like to keep when this period of quarantine is over?

Being kinder to myself.

To go a bit deeper, Bronwen, please share with us some of your insights about the richer meanings one might derive from this pandemic?

I ask each day what I can do to transform the fear that fuels, and is fueled by, this pandemic, and how I can contribute to creating a future where we do not live in fear, where we have allowed ourselves to know the true nature of this pandemic, and how it can be contained and dismantled.

I continue to work to distinguish truth from lies, deceptions, and half-truths. My journey with the Faerie Flowers has been an intrinsic part of that journey. Magic, here defined as 'the conscious creation of your experience in accordance with your will and imagination', is real, and can be used for benefit and harm. When someone is committed to maintaining the 'power over' paradigm through conscious manipulation of others through words, images, and actions designed to enthrall their hearts and minds and support you at their expense, this is dark magic. Imagination is limited to greed and excessive consumption, and the will becomes focused on winning on your own terms at all cost to others, toying with the lives and futures of others for pleasure.

Magic becomes light magic when the definition is expanded to include 'and your love', for then there is intended and protected use of your magic to support conscious co-creation in alignment with the evolutionary destiny of each of us. We are at a turning point, when light magic is overcoming dark magic, though not using these words or definitions. The light of hope is re-igniting in so many hearts, despite so much that would seem to seek to destroy hope forever. Hope is shining forth ever more brightly in hearts that are open to bring forth the never-before New World.

A quote from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* helps explain the power of words.

> "When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.'
>
> 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'
>
> 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master — that's all."

It is time to recognize "Whoever loves the most, wins." (Barry 'Bears' Kaufman)

We are called to reopen our hearts to love. To discover what love really is, its mystery, its power—and most of all—its grace. To let go of the lies and half-truths we have been seduced by in pain and fear. To learn how to create a win-win-win. To be co-creative with our inner sources and resources of love, and with nature. Nature is such a powerful loving and living feedback system, especially operative through our most intimate piece of real estate, our bodies. For me, and many others, conscious co-creation with Faerie is also important. Know it consciously or not, we are all on task and we are uniquely and collectively choosing the future that will unfold.

Bronwen, please share with us some of your insights about the richer meanings one might derive from this pandemic?

I ask each day what I can do to transform the fear that fuels and is fueled by this pandemic, and how I can contribute to creating a future where we do not live in fear, where we have allowed ourselves to know the true nature of this pandemic, and how it can be contained and dismantled.

—Bronwen Gates

For you, personally, Bronwen, in what way has the pandemic been a liminal time for you, a threshold to what?

So many things! Making peace with myself. In some ways the pandemic started early for me—in terms of pain and isolation—I broke my wrist rather badly in January and spent weeks handicapped and in pain. I knew when it happened that it was not an accident (I had foretellings that I did not recognize until it happened), but I did not realize then, that in some ways, it was to begin the consciousness work that has occupied me during the pandemic.

When the pandemic became official, I took the pandemic "to heart," consciously using the isolation to do deep diving into experiences and memories I had avoided as too painful. A time of soul searching, into my personal stories, and the collective stories of humanity. Why was this my approach?

I checked in as the infections spread and explored if I could harness sufficient spiritual resource to reduce its spread and co-create a fizzle for this infection. Not possible. This was, and is, a necessary spiritual awakening for us all, whatever our circumstance.

I recognized a lot of people were going to die, and my first prayer was to ask if the spiritual resources, that are my allies (and their resources), could make it possible that everyone who faced the gateway of death be given the gift of conscious awareness that they were held in loving care and that there was choice even in this circumstance. That no one, no matter their physical circumstance "died alone." I also made an Essence to embody this prayer.

And then I got to work. I admitted to, and explored, depths of loneliness and fear, feelings of failure, lack of worth, low self-esteem, that I'm actually dying (this has changed my understanding of near death experiences forever!), that I'm fatally flawed—so many of these sourced in shame in so many forms and flavors. In each case I have chosen to deny the power of authority to any of the stories generated by painful feelings, and to do my part to reduce the power of these stories in our collective consciousness.

Tempered by beauty and love, I reminded myself of the deepest truth for us all, that these stories are not truth, but are engendered by feelings and experiences in times past that have (sadly) been the truth of our experience and relate to broken heartedness, feelings of deep betrayal, or toxic shame. It has felt like a seemingly endless search to get beneath these feelings, to claim self-acceptance, and gain mastery of these feelings, so that I can create a new foundation based on goodness, truth and beauty, eternal qualities that are foundational parts of our essential nature.

What is the first thing you want to do that you haven't been able to do once the quarantine is lifted?

The isolation from my grandchildren (ages six and two) was excruciating. I had been accustomed to seeing them daily and the joy of their little beings was my delight. To have Thea (the two-year-old) run into my arms was an exquisite thrill. Even when we video chatted, it was not the same, and I could see the hurt and pain in their eyes. They missed that physical intimacy as much as I did, and it continued even when we had permission to open up to distanced contact. We did finally create a pod of family intimacy, and finally the joy is shining in their hearts again, as in mine.

We went camping at Warren Dunes State Park, where I could be wholly immersed in love and beauty—family, forest, the dunes—and the lakeshore. Beaches are such liminal spaces where the elements—earth, air, fire, and water—are so alive and present. They are the domain of the boundary dwellers where I can be re-energized and feel at home. And I got to swim in the Lake!

What one guilty pleasure have you indulged in while in quarantine?

Why does pleasure have to be guilty? I want to enjoy sacred pleasure, and all (true) pleasure is sacred… pleasure that makes me feel alive and enriched. So, my unguilty pleasure is lightening up—letting myself enjoy being alive.

Bill Zirinsky

Bill Zirinsky has been the Editorial Director and Publisher of the Crazy Wisdom Community Journal *since it began in 1995. He and his wife, Ruth Schekter, have been the owners of Crazy Wisdom Bookstore (and Tea Room) since 1989. He has crafted many of the publication's in-depth interviews over the years, and also written occasional personal essays, including articles about both his disabled children, and his healthy children, the gifts his mother passed on to him, saying goodbye to his long term psychotherapist, and how much he loves the ocean waves. He has never been on the cover before but agreed to join in with the cover photo shoot, and to participate in this feature.*

What inspired you to become a publisher/editor/bookstore owner?

Life happening. From the age of 9, I was a prolific writer for my summer camp weekly, and then wrote for high school and dorm newspapers, and started an alternative post-college magazine… So, I had a bent for writing and publishing since I was little… Local publishing is meaningful. I remember the feeling of pride and satisfaction I had the time I walked into the Central Café on South Main Street, in 1979, and saw a few people sitting and reading my just-published cover story on the unionization of the University Cellar Bookstore. I had found my calling.

— Bill Zirinsky

Did you develop any new habits during these months of stay-at-home orders and social distancing, or because of fear of exposure to Covid-19?

No, not really. Social distancing has become a habit, and I take it very seriously, and so my family has hardly gotten together with other people since March 13th. But it is a habit I can happily shed once there is a vaccine.

How have you handled this unique time in your life? Have you found yourself getting lonely, and if you have, how have you helped yourself to feel better? What gifts or blessings have come your way during these months, and what has been hardest?

I have spent lots of time with my wife, Ruth, and our 12-year old daughter, Grace. Hard to be lonely with our very entertaining and lively Grace around to brighten each hour! We created a nightly ritual of watching some television together. We have gone through watching three Netflix series about raising teenagers. First, *Atypical*, about an optimistic teenager with high-functioning autism, and his athletic and fierce teenage sister. And, more recently, 60 episodes of *The Fosters*. *The Fosters* is about a lesbian couple raising five teenagers, four of whom spent time in foster situations and got adopted by this family. Ruth and I also watched (after Grace went to bed) the British series, *Sex Education*, and again it is about the complexities of family life—a brilliant show. Our other daughter, Leela, is 17, and both our girls are adopted from Guatemala, and each show has profoundly resonated on many levels. These shows have truly helped me understand my role as a parent of teenagers. Worth two years of family therapy, I'd say.

The pandemic has been a gift in many ways, as I've found myself gliding into new choices about my work. New ways that I had been contemplating for a long time but had not actualized. And the way the pandemic has sadly stretched out has allowed me to gently pace the making of those changes in my work life at the bookstore. Having so much slow down has allowed me a slower tempo in other areas, too.

How do you see your work life changing as a result of this period in your life?

I am ready to retire from running Crazy Wisdom Bookstore after 31 years and let Sarah Newland run it (though Ruth and I will continue to own it.) She has been with us for 27 years and is oh, so capable of running it well. Oh, what a relief! I see staying devoted to our print publication and weekly online e-zine, and traveling more, once the pandemic ends.

The passage of time can feel faster now that I'm in my 60's, and so the passage to 80 is not going to take that long, subjectively. I had better take the trips I have been wanting to take while I am healthy and energetic and still inspired to see more of the world. Then again, Grace has six more school years at home, so I intend to relish those years with her. And our Leela has just returned home in July, after three years in boarding school in Montana. I have missed her being part of our family's sheltering in place together, and I'm so excited about that happening now (with a dash of anxiety tossed into that mix).

Have you indulged in any guilty pleasures while in quarantine? If yes, what?

Pleasures, yes. Guilty, no. The best pleasure in the spring was taking long midday and later afternoon walks in our Burns Park neighborhood. The greatest pleasure of this past summer has been taking regular ocean swims on a very secluded beach, but it is a pleasure I have indulged in for years before I knew the word "coronavirus."

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

This has been a very traumatic episode for all of us, whether we can currently let that in, or not… I think the most profound aspect of this has been to remind us of our mortality, and of the randomness of it all. Or, as Bronwen frames it, "a necessary spiritual awakening for us all."

— Bill Zirinsky

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming as an adult?

I had ambitions to be the first Jewish President, an Oscar-winning actor, a major league second baseman, a publisher, writer, to star in *Oliver*, a dancer, real estate magnate, talk show host… perhaps fairly typical fantasies for a white boy growing up well-to-do in the 1950's and 60's. My fantasies had an immature quality to them, and only when I started smoking pot in earnest when I got to college at U-M did my understanding of myself and the world deepen. From then on, I mostly fantasized about being a psychotherapist, a writer, or a publisher/editor.

What inspired you to become a publisher/editor/bookstore owner?

Life happening. From the age of 9, I was a prolific writer for my summer camp weekly, and then wrote for high school and dorm newspapers, and started an alternative post-college magazine, *The Alchemist of Ann Arbor,* with Sue Budin and Tom Cavalier and others. So, I had a bent for writing and publishing since I was little. I have always loved putting my thoughts down on paper and then having others comment on them. Publishing for the people in my own town is fun and satisfying. Local publishing is meaningful. I remember the feeling of pride and satisfaction I had the time I walked into the Central Café on South Main Street, in 1979, and saw a few people sitting and reading my just-published cover story on the unionization of the University Cellar Bookstore. I had found my calling.

Did your childhood dreams manifest in your adult life? How?

I guess so. (See above.) I feel lucky and grateful.

What will have changed in your life permanently due to covid-19?

I hope I survive the pandemic. Sometimes I wake up with anxiety that I will not. Then I swim, and my anxiety lifts. Hard to say yet how my life may change because of this pandemic time. But it has disrupted and altered the chemistry of daily life in profound ways.

What do you think is the most fascinating or profound aspect (or aspects) of this pandemic, and its effects on our culture and country?

One essayist wrote that, unlike the Vietnam War, 9/11, stock market gyrations and recessions, the pandemic has had a direct effect on each and every one of us. It has been fascinating to be an observer of this, and a participant.

My heart aches when I let myself really take in the suffering this has caused, the illnesses and death, the dislocation and financial ruin, the fear it has engendered in all of us, the hardships for so many. What will come out of it, I do not know. I tend to imagine that once a vaccine starts to be widely distributed, the fear will rather suddenly evaporate, and there will be an understandable but risky euphoria. Risky not in terms of a health risk, necessarily, but I wonder if there will be an all-too quick "return to normalcy" and whether our culture will overwhelmingly begin again to over-indulge.

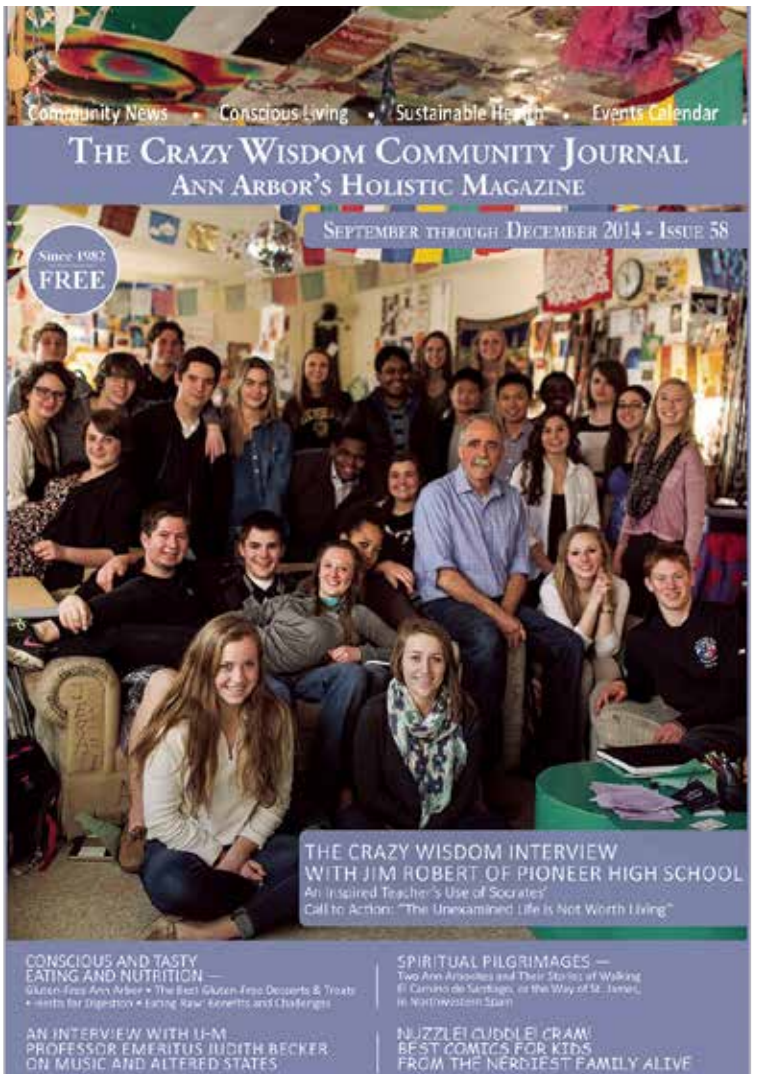
If that is so, I can picture a rapid casting aside of some of the deeper culture-wide insights and possibilities that have come from this time period. This has been a very traumatic episode for all of us, whether we can currently let that in, or not.

I think the most profound aspect of this has been to remind us of our mortality, and of the randomness of it all. Or, as Bronwen frames it, "a necessary spiritual awakening for us all."

A Page from the Crazy Wisdom Journal — A Look at Our First 25 Years

By Kirsten Mowrey
and CWJ editorial staff

(Editor's Note: Kirsten Mowrey has been a steady journalistic presence on the Crazy Wisdom Journal *staff for close to ten years. She has contributed numerous feature stories and interviews for us, including cover stories on Tiya Miles, professor of American Culture, Afroamerican Studies, and History at U-M, and Functional Nutritionist Coco Newton).*



Think back in time to twenty-five years ago. The year was 1995. You may have had kids, just out of school and starting your first career, or maybe you weren't even born yet. People communicated by calling each other on landlines, though cell phones were beginning to appear. Magazines came with discs offering you a new service: America Online. When you turned on your computer (if you even owned one!), you watched it warm up, startup icon blinking for ten minutes before it was able to slowly process your requests.

However, this article isn't a nostalgic trip about the good old days. I'm setting the scene, reminding us of how things used to be before technology made our lives so fast and full. Before we could access information as fast as we could think of it. It's a reminder of the world that existed when the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* was born and introducing you to some of the reasons why it was ushered into this world.

The local community connected in those early days via word of mouth, bulletin board, or flyer. Finding a holistic practitioner was a time-consuming business of searching, questioning like-minded friends, and visiting events to learn more about nutrition, bodywork, energy healing, midwifery, or anything that constituted the mystery traditions: astrology, herbalism, tarot, Kabbalah, numerology, Neopaganism, and Gnosticism, to name a few. These often denigrated disciplines had spent centuries living on the edges of western culture—never part of the mainstream, yet never fading. The counterculture of the 1960s, its interest in leftist politics and consciousness, brought awareness to these practices, along with the religions and practices of Asia: Buddhism, Hinduism, yoga, Feng shui, Zen, and meditation. All of these interests found a home at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, founded in 1982. The store bridged, as U-M Philosophy Professor Emeritus Richard Gull said, "the connection between the New Left and the New Age."

Deep Spring Founder Barbara Brodsky recalled, "When I moved to Ann Arbor in 1968, and sought people with whom to meditate, there was nothing! I was delighted to see Crazy Wisdom open its doors in 1982 and meet a few people with similar interests while browsing for books. So many of us longed for connection and dialogue. Later in the 1980s, I began to open my home to people interested in meditation instruction and to talk with Aaron (a channeled entity). It was hard to reach people in those days. Word of mouth worked best, and flyers left in the bookstore. So many of us desperately longed for a forum, a way to exchange ideas, offerings, and to get to know each other."

Nutritionist Cindy Klement remembers going to Crazy Wisdom in the very early 1990s. "In the back of the store was an 8-1/2" x 11" four-page Crazy Wisdom flyer with the names of about 80 individuals in Ann Arbor who were practicing some form of holistic healing in town. (It was called the *Health and Healing Resource Guide*, and had been created and produced by Jonathan Ellis.) I was honored to be one of the people on that list as an herbalist, nutritionist, and health educator." Having a physical location was the first, and sometimes only connection, point for many in Ann Arbor in those days. Mainstream publications, newspapers, and television did not cover these areas. Sound shaman Norma Gentile said, "As a student at the University (and of all things metaphysical) I scanned the mounds of flyers on the billboard and picked out many events to attend. As I became a performer and energy healer myself, I found few resources to widely publicize events that were classified by mainstream magazines and newspapers as being within this brave new world."

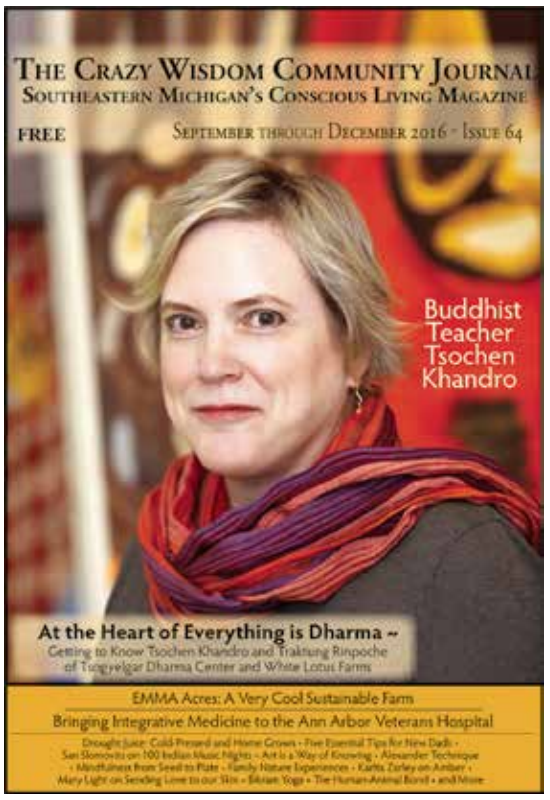
Into this brave new world, the world of the dreams of the baby boomers, hippies, spiritual seekers, and political wonks was born the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. Over time, the store needed a voice. Flyers are good, but collecting them, merging them, and creating a chorus from the individual components—that was the needed next step. So, in the fall of 1995 those flyers on the bulletin board became a publication: the first *Crazy Wisdom Calendar*, put together by bookstore staffer Rachel McKee. It featured yoga, Reiki, Polarity Therapy, and a vegetarian Thanksgiving cooking class, because meatless meals were an anomaly in the Midwest. Within a year the *Calendar* was multiple pages and had begun featuring interviews with local practitioners. As publisher Bill Zirinsky wrote in September 1996, "This is not northern California, but Ann Arbor's alternative community has matured and thrived over the last twenty-five years. A new generation has arrived and added to the richness and diversity of what is being offered here. This fourth edition contains 150 listings; it's exciting to take note of just how alive this community is!"

Photography appeared in 1997, adding faces to those featured interviews, as well as quotes, book reviews, and staff biographies. Like any young being, the *Journal* found its legs and took off running. By 1998, the community had grown enough that advertising debuted, listing practitioners as full-blown businesses, not merely people offering an occasional lecture or class. Psychologist Cam Vozar wrote, "As a practitioner, the *Journal* was supportive in starting my private practice business. Twenty-five years ago EMDR and transpersonal therapies were not accepted as alternatives to more traditional psychotherapy. I could advertise a lecture for free and a business card listing for a modest price. I always felt it was a good return on my energetic investment."

As the "alternative" community became mainstream, nationally known speakers were promoted in the Calendar: Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Marianne Williamson, Susun Weed. Williamson was even interviewed in the Calendar while she was at the Church of Today, but only because she was local. Zirinsky said, "My aspirations were to make this an intelligent magazine about these subjects, but locally focused. That's really been key. We all get to read *Tricycle* or *SageWoman* or any of the others that are national magazines about our related content. But to say [that] there's enough interesting material in Ann Arbor and in the southeastern Michigan region that we're not going to do any sort of syndicated articles—what we're doing is pretty cool. We're not going to have Deepak Chopra in the *Crazy Wisdom Journal*. Even if he comes to town. We might put his event in our Calendar section, but we're not going to feature an article about it."

Crazy Wisdom Bookstore moved in 1999 as if readying itself for the new millennium. Writing about the move in one of his very occasional notes in the January 1999 *Crazy Wisdom Calendar*, Zirinsky wrote, "We want to create a more permanent home (in a world of impermanence) for a countercultural haven." Reflecting on the arrival of Whole Foods and the growth of the *Calendar*, he wrote, "In this town, the counterculture has become part of the culture, and we don't even stop to think about it much." Psychotherapist Brian O'Donnell agrees. He said, "I'm proud to be a member of a community that has such a well-crafted and comprehensive journal that covers the domains of consciousness, healing, and engaged civic life. This journal continues to grow and flower sprouting new branches that showcase the wide array of opportunities for well-being and contribution in our area. I often marvel at the incredible variety of offerings and

practitioners that occurs here in my back yard."

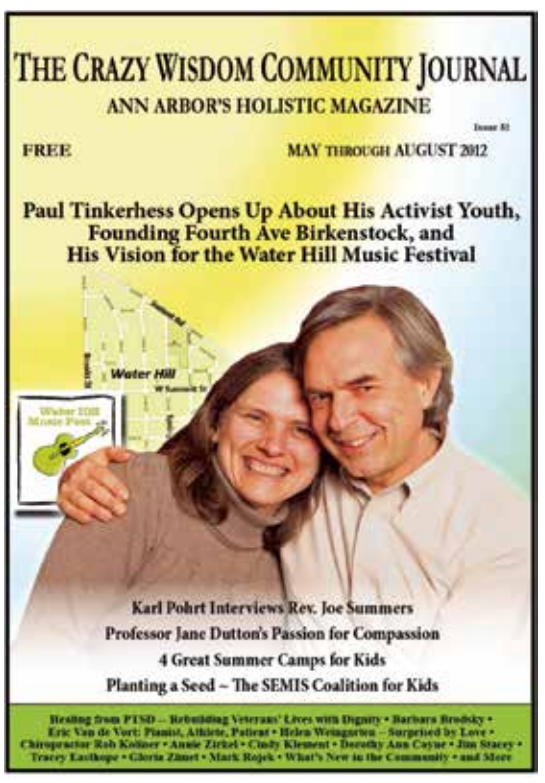


Zirinsky published sporadic personal essays, as well as comments on community and world events, until about 2010. But his voice was mostly to be found as the questioner in lengthy and in-depth interviews with local community figures. He conducted deeply engaging interviews with herbalist Brownen Gates; Jewel Heart founder and Tibetan Buddhist teacher Gehlek Rimpoche; integrative physician Dr. James Neuenschwander of BioEnergy Medical Center; Author and Psychic John Friedlander; Traktung Rinpoche and Tsochen Khandro, husband-and-wife founders of Flaming Jewel Dharma Center; legendary U-M Psychology-and-Religion Professor Richard Mann; Carole Lapidos and Sally Wisotzkey on Raising Strong and Confident Daughters; Zen Buddhist Priestess Haju Sunim; and Dr. Tariq Bel-Bahar of the U-M Center for Consciousness Science, among other notable interviews. Meanwhile, Linda Diane Feldt and Jonathan Ellis also contributed in-depth interviews with the likes of Barbara Brodsky, founder of Deep Spring Center; Dancer/Choreographer Jesse Richards; and Dr. Sara Warber, key player in the founding of the U-M Complementary and Integrative Medicine Program.

The *Journal* continued to expand. Back in 2001, 4,500 copies were distributed. For the last ten years, 11,000 copies have been distributed all over southeastern Michigan. Tarot reader and sage woman Jeanne Adwani said, "Through its informative pages you can find pretty much anyone and anything that is resonant with health and well-being, to crafting the magical, and so much more in the in-between. Events, interviews, advertisements, new faces, old faces, all invite us to know our community better, and know whom to find when we are in need for alternative expertise. And also, to simply sit with a cuppa and read through the informative pages of the many incredible people and opportunities that surround us."

In 2004 the *Calendar* officially became the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*. Color—the ultraviolet kind—adorned the cover as well as photographs, so artists' work could be seen in all its original glory, though color didn't make its way throughout the *Journal* until 2010. By the mid-2000s, the *Journal* was regularly reaching fifty pages, a ten-fold growth from its inception. Also, in 2010, the *Journal* came full circle with the addition of a Kids Section, giving the next generation a chance to look into a broader world. Now multi-generational and mainstream, the community publication sustained itself financially, and offered all the dreams and aspirations of the sixties to anyone receptive. Haju Sunim of the Zen Buddhist Center said, "We are so much more a community in this part of our state because of the *Crazy Wisdom Journal*. Our hearts and minds have been opened and many of us, discovered, through the fine articles, pictures, books, performances, and talks which have been offered."

O'Donnell concurs with this statement. "*The Crazy Wisdom Journal*, like the many expressions of wholeness it features, is also itself a healing presence. It illuminates, it integrates, it challenges, it links, and it explores what is below the surface."



As the years went on, the publication grew into a real team effort. In the early years, the publication was largely produced by Zirinsky and Molly Nuzzo, who was the creative and dedicated Design and Production Editor for 15 years. Local psychotherapist Linda Lawson took many of the best cover photos, and the advertisements just sold themselves. And Sarah Newland, now the General Manager of the Bookstore, meticulously oversaw and edited the Calendar Section, (which she did for almost 20 years).

Starting in 2010, two key players joined up, and the Journal began to take off. Carol Karr, who had been a longtime manager at the bookstore, became the Design and Production Editor, when Nuzzo moved to Maryland to become a professor of Art.

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Some Memories and Tributes on the *Crazy Wisdom Journal's* 25th Anniversary

Lori Fithian
drummer and community builder

How is it possible that 25 years have gone by so fast!? It really does seem like yesterday, when I first approached Bill about offering an open drum circle in the store. It has actually been so long ago, that I can't remember when we first started doing it—I will have to go back to the archives of the CW Journal to find out. I am glad to know that they have a hard-bound archive in the store—such a rich history of activity in our special community!

I want to say a huge public thank you to Bill and Ruth for their support, in my own path of drumming—in the store and out in the community—but mostly for offering such an important resource to Ann Arbor. The journal is like an encyclopedia of information—so many treasures to discover—nutrition, wellness, spirituality, music, people, places, events and more. And I always enjoy the interviews—I love reading the stories of how people get to where they are now. The Journal has certainly helped me maintain my 'business' presence in the community, listing my events and monthly drum circle dates at the store, and sometimes a feature photo—which is always a bit embarrassing! If I ever need to find a practitioner of any sort, I head to my latest copy of the Journal first, even before an internet search!

I send huge gratitude and congratulations to everyone who puts together this lovely Ann Arbor treasure, to all that support it by advertising their amazing services and products, and to all the special people who read and love it like I do! May it (and the store!) live on for many more years to come!

Brian O'Donnell
psychotherapist and Pathwork leader

I am proud to be a member of a community that has such a well-crafted and comprehensive journal that covers the domains of consciousness, healing, and engaged civic life.

This Journal continues to grow and flower, sprouting new branches that showcase the wide array of opportunities for well-being and contribution in our area. I often marvel at the incredible variety of offerings and practitioners that occurs here in my back yard.

The Crazy Wisdom Journal, like the many expressions of wholeness it features, is also itself a healing presence. It illuminates, it integrates, it challenges, it links, and it explores what is below the surface.

Picking up the Journal is akin to walking into the Crazy Wisdom store. I feel expanded, relaxed, stretched, and invited to discover new worlds in a beautifully designed layout.

Happy Birthday CWJ!

Cindy Klement
holistic health educator and author

I am not sure if Bill wants memories from before he owned the store, but I recall going to Crazy Wisdom in the very late 1980s. At the time Aura Glaser owned the store and it was located on 4th Avenue close to People's Food Co Op.

In the back of the store she had an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper with the names of about 8 to 10 individuals in Ann Arbor who were practicing some form of holistic healing in town. I was honored to be one of the people on that list as an herbalist, nutritionist, and health educator.

Because of the work and passion of Bill Zirinsky, that single sheet of paper is now a robust and well-known journal across the state of Michigan and beyond. Bill has continuously featured health practitioners in the Ann Arbor area over the decades and has been a strong advocate for those of us in the healing arts. I have been extremely fortunate to have my work featured in CW twice over the past 28 years, and I remain quite grateful for those opportunities.

Please congratulate Bill for me and offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to this work!

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A Page from the Crazy Wisdom Journal — A Look at Our First 25 Years

Continued from page 19

Karr brought new design and computer skills and talents to the look of the publication, and she provided a steady hand at the helm of the entire production process.

And Rory Russell joined up, becoming the Ad Rep, using her charm and soothing presence to double the publication's ad sales almost right away, tapping into a well of appreciation for the local focus, journalistic integrity, and visual appeal of the *Journal.*

Next came some stronger and skilled editing, with Maureen McMahon, Amy Garber, Julianne Linderman, and, more recently, Jennifer Carson. McMahon, as Managing Editor, lifted the range and quality of the content, and Linderman, later on in that same role, brought a striking minimalist design sensibility to many of the page designs. Carson, now the Managing Editor, has brought with her an astonishing range of editorial and design abilities. With real verve, she jump-started *The Crazy Wisdom Weeky e-Zine* during the pandemic, as a complement to the print publication, which had to take a pause during the coronoavirus lockdown.

Having stronger editors meant better writers wanted to write for the *Journal*, and so Rachel Urist, Sandor Slomovits, Karl Pohrt, Richard Gull, Laura Cowan, Crysta Coburn, Madeleine Diehl, Irena Nagler, Maureen McMahon, Angela Madaras and others became regular contributors and feature writers. In particular, Rachel Urist contributed sensitive and beautifully written profiles of local people who were members "in good standing" of the regional consciousness community, including cover stories on Cantor Annie Rose of Temple Beth Emeth; Anthroposophist Marian Leon of the thriving Rudolf Steiner community in town; Tantre Farm couple Deb Lentz and Richard Andres; Blue Turtle Camp founders Frank Levey and Larissa Czuchnowsky; and again, a profile of Haju Sunim of the Zen Temple, only 20 years later!

Sandor Slomovits contributed wonderful narratives and interviews, including cover stories on Paul Tinkerhess and the Water Hill Music Festival; beloved Community Farm couple Annie Elder and Paul Bantle; Fair Food Network founder Oran Hesterman; and fifty years of the Ecology Center. And McMahon brought her keen intelligence to stories on tile craftswoman Nawal Motawi, U-M Jazz and Consciousness Professor Ed Sarath, and local Pioneer High philosophy teacher, Jim Robert.

Meanwhile, the decline of print media came with a bonus for the *Journal*—excellent new photographers coming on board, such as Rachael Waring, Susan Ayer, Joni Strickfaden, and Hilary Nichols, among others. All in all, the publication became thicker, more colorful, deeper, and more wide-ranging in its editorial content. A food section was added, plus travel, pets, sustainable health, green living, and yoga columns. A veritable feast of good local writing, photography, original illustrations, events, and information.

Here we are now, twenty-five years later. "Because of the work and passion of Bill Zirinsky, that four-page flyer is now a robust and well-known journal across the state of Michigan and beyond," said Klement. San Slomovits, of the duo Gemini and a writer for the *Journal* said, "I often find things in the *Journal* that turn out to be interesting and useful in my life." Zirinsky himself said, "The *Journal* has grown into this really wonderful realization of what I wanted it to be. I was a publishing person since I was a kid. The gift that meant the most to me when I was nine was a little printing press. The rest of [the paper] was already done but you got to create the headline. I [also] played a card game with fifty cards, each card with a little face of a person and a profession. What appealed to me: it was publisher."

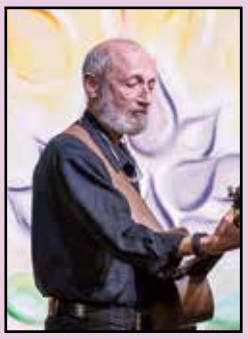
When I contacted individuals for their memories about the *Journal*, drummer Lori Fithian wrote, "How is it possible that 25 years have gone by so fast!? It really does seem like yesterday when I first approached Bill about offering an open drum circle in the store. The *Journal* is like an encyclopedia of information—so many treasures to discover—nutrition, wellness, spirituality, music, people, places, events, and more. I always enjoy the interviews. I love reading the stories of how people get to where they are now." Everyone I corresponded with expressed their thanks, gratitude, and appreciation of the *Journal* for the way it had assisted them personally and professionally, and for the benefit of the greater community as a whole.

What then, do the next twenty-five years look like? Zirinsky said, "It's a dream that's been realized, but it's still evolving. I'm not tired of its evolution. It's cool what the publication is doing." The *Journal* has an online presence and growing that is the current focus. "[I want] more feedback," said Zirinsky, "That's where the online piece matters to me. And with the pandemic, Jennifer Carson started *The Crazy Wisdom Weekly*, a breezier online weekly e-zine. We get to do what we're doing with the *Journal* still, and we're committed to its in-depth articles and interviews, but we now also have a more timely way to engage our regional readership."

Desires for peace, an end to war, and hopes for harmony characterized the consciousness movements of the sixties and continue to be relevant for the community. In an interview with social worker, Gae Winn, on the one-year anniversary of September 11th, she said, "I want people to wake up: to the knowledge that we are one planet and one community. We are diverse, unique, but the hatred with which we approach one another, the disdain and negativity, has got to stop for the sake of us all." Giving voice to our hopes for harmony, internal and external, and building community around our passions, celebrations, struggles and joys, the *Journal* reflects our community in all its many facets.

Some Memories and Tributes on the *Crazy Wisdom Journal's* 25th Anniversary

Continued from page 19



Sandor Slomovits
musician and author

First of all, congratulations on 25 years! I have been reading the Journal all these years because it highlights people, communities, and their work within the Ann Arbor community, who I might not have learned of in any other way. I often find things in the Journal that turn out to be interesting and useful in my life.

About six years ago I began writing articles for the Journal; profiles about people and organizations in our community who I admired because of the valuable contributions they make to the quality of life locally, and nationally. I am particularly grateful to Bill Zirinsky and all the Journal staff, for giving me that opportunity. Here is to your next 25!

Jeanne Adwani
artist and poet

Crazy Wisdom Journal is a gift of service to the whole community. Through its informative pages you can find pretty much anyone and anything that is resonant with health and well-being, to crafting the magical, and so much more in the in between.

Events, interviews, advertisements, new faces, old faces, all invite us to know our community better, know whom to find when we are in need for alternative expertise. And also, to simply sit with a cuppa and read through the informative pages of the many incredible people and opportunities that surround us. We are made better for having this service gifted to us three times a year.

I have had the honor to be part of Bill and Ruth's journey before the advent of the Journal. My gratitude is vast for knowing them and being on the pages of this great community paper. Thanks Ruth and Bill.

It is with great love that I say thank you to all whom make this journal a true community experience.

Cam Vozar
psychotherapist

Crazy Wisdom Journal is about community and connection. It is intertwined with the bookstore, the tea room, and the meeting room. It is a place where I belong**.**

As a reader, I love the breadth and depth of the Journal from animal therapy to yoga, plus poetry, music, artists, books, and a children's section. All included in one holistic calendar. Through the deep interviews I reconnect to old friends and meet new practitioners. It is full of social, political, and spiritual learning.

As a practitioner, the Journal was supportive in starting my private practice business. 25 years ago, EMDR and transpersonal therapies were not accepted as alternatives to more traditional psychotherapy. I could advertise a lecture for free and a business card listing for a modest price. I always felt it was a good return on my energetic investment.

When I was featured in an article, I appreciated the professionalism and quality of the interviewer. Crazy Wisdom wants to get the story right. I am grateful to Bill and Ruth for their vision and values that helped make Ann Arbor a place I want to live and work.

Haju Sunim
Zen Buddhist teacher

We are so much more a community in this part of our state because of the Crazy Wisdom Journal, Bookstore and Tea Room. Our hearts and minds have been opened and many of us, discovered, through the fine articles, pictures, books, performances, and talks which have been offered. Bill's humility, perseverance, and quiet savvy and enthusiasm as the force behind it all are very much appreciated. Gratefully, on behalf of our Zen Buddhist sangha.

Norma Gentile
sound shaman

I first came to know of *The Crazy Wisdom Journal* through the bookstore, which I frequented in its original 4th Ave location. As a student at the University (and of all things metaphysical) I scanned the mounds of fliers on the billboard and picked out many events to attend. As I became a performer and energy healer myself, I found few resources to widely publicize events that were classified by mainstream magazines and newspapers as being within this brave new world.

The CW Journal was not just a resource in which I could list my own offerings and events, but a window into the world of the many people who enrich the community with their own offerings. A new copy of the journal is still something I look forward to seeing and reading each season. My congratulations to Bill and everyone who brings this together for all of our benefit.

Richard Gull
philosopher and author

Making a few contributions of articles and interviews to the CWCJ over the past ten years has been a joyous experience for me in my retirement from U of M, even though two of the articles were eulogies for close friends—Karl Pohrt and professor Immanuel Tanay. An in-depth interview with Professor Howard Brick in 2012 about a conference he organized about the Port Huron Statement, the manifesto of Students for a Democratic Society, followed by an article in 2014 about my experiences at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California taught me about the connection between the New Left and the New Age, which both started in 1962. In 2018, I published a piece derived from my adoption memoir. I loved working with Bill, Maureen, and Carol, who provide thoughtful editing and professional design. CWCJ has been a vital resource for this community, a vehicle for a diversity of creativity. Happy 25th.

Barbara Brodsky
meditation teacher and author

When I moved to Ann Arbor in 1968, and sought people with whom to meditate, there was nothing! My husband and I attended Ann Arbor Friends Meeting and found real spiritual fellowship there, but we also sought companions for broader spiritual exploration. I was delighted to see Crazy Wisdom open its doors in 1982 and meet a few people with similar interests while browsing for books. So many of us longed for connection and dialogue. Later in the 1980's I began to open my home to people interested in meditation instruction and to talk with Aaron. It was hard to reach people in those days. Word of mouth worked best, and flyers left in the bookstore. So many of us desperately longed for a forum, a way to exchange ideas, offerings and to get to know each other. Thanks to *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* for providing that.

One day in early 1990, just a year after the formal start of Deep Spring Center, someone came to my door with a funny story. She had gone into the CW bookstore looking for she didn't know what, slipped on one of my flyers that had fallen on the floor, caught her fall by grabbing the shelf, which pulled the book "Miracle of Love" about Neem Karoli Baba (my guru throughout this lifetime) by Ram Dass, down on her head. Nothing happens by chance! She picked up the book and my flyer and came to find me. She and her husband were soon regulars coming to our house for meditation and evenings with Aaron and we are still good friends 30 years later. Spirit works in wonderful ways and it is working through CWCJ. Thanks to all who have created this wonderful store and journal for us all. It has been a joy to write some articles here to share my experiences and to read about and meet so many of you. I look forward to seeing where it goes in the future.

"Congratulations on 25 years of serving the local Lightworker and Way-Shower community. Thank you! May your Light shine on forever!"

— Karlta Zarley

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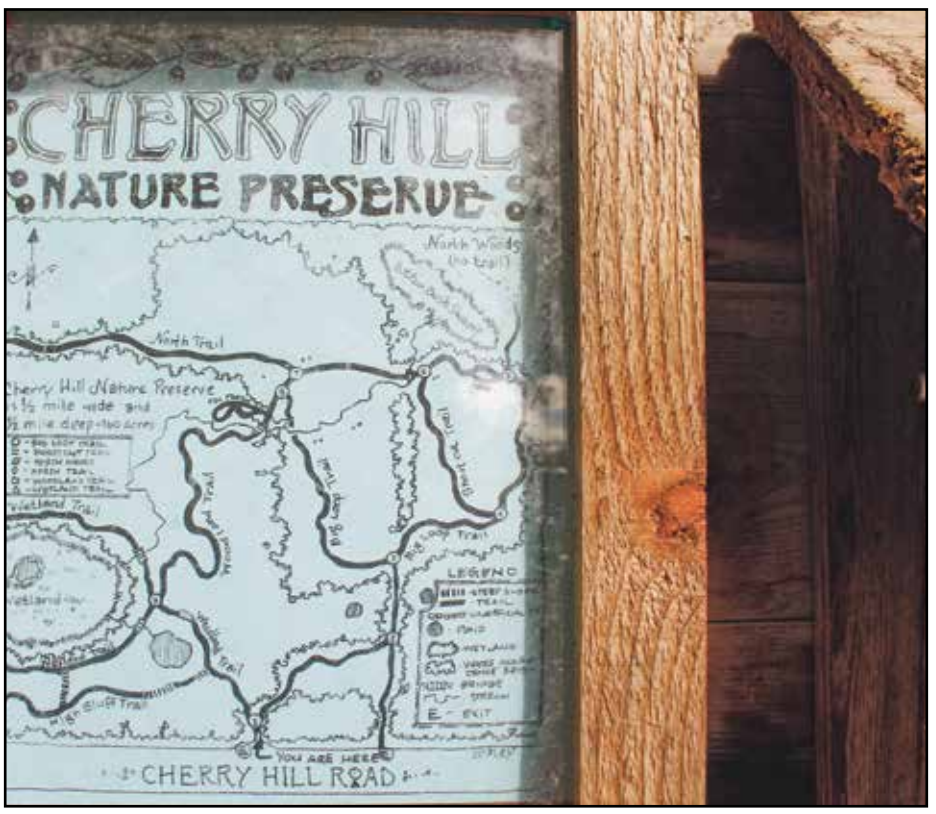
HIDDEN GEMS

Green Spaces You Might Not Know About, but Need to Explore!

By Annabelle Otto

We're fortunate to live in a city where nature is preserved. Over 200 parks continue to be open to the public during the pandemic in Ann Arbor, and studies have shown that being in nature makes us healthier, more creative, more empathetic, and more likely to pursue active engagement with the world around us. No wonder Gallup Park gets so crowded! If you're looking for a quieter space to immerse yourself in nature, these three hidden gems are exceptional places to unplug.

Cherry Hill Nature Preserve



A hand-drawn map encased in glass and wood greeted us at the entrance to the trail, and we found more maps dotted throughout the woods.

The Ash Trail takes you for a lovely stroll around a grove of ash trees.

The first place my boyfriend and I explored was the Cherry Hill Nature Preserve. This beautiful preserve features a 1.6-mile loop for people and dogs alike. While there are small sections of wooden boardwalk closer to the Wetland Trail, most of the trails are dirt trails that would make it difficult for handicapped people to traverse. Dogs do need to be leashed when enjoying the trails, and you should be sure to clean up after them, but Cherry Hill provides waste disposal facilities at numerous points along the trail. Humans are not so lucky as to have facilities at Cherry Hill, so empty your bladder beforehand.

Unfortunately, parking at Cherry Hill is almost as nonexistent as facilities. You can only park on the side of the road close to the preserve entrance. A hand-drawn map encased in glass and wood greeted us at the entrance to the trail, and we found more maps dotted throughout the woods. The preserve is 15.5 miles wide and the

Continued on page 24

HIDDEN GEMS

Continued from page 23

map showcases one large main trail named the “Big Loop Trail” with a shorter trail, cutting the distance in half, called the “Shortcut Trail,” as well as a number of other trails.

At first, I was mildly irritated by the noise pollution. We heard cars driving through Dixboro nearby and planes overhead. But the trees do their best to block out the noise, and as we walked deeper into the preserve, most of the clamor faded away, and we became mesmerized by the tall trees that were spread out from each other to allow lots of sunlight through. Although the setting is peaceful, this trail demands some dexterity since the ground is uneven and loose sticks seem to pop up out of nowhere. We ambled through the Shortcut Trail and found ourselves on a dense, winding path that led to a small field where we watched the clouds mosey across the sky.

If you’re not up for a hilly hike, the Wetland Trail connects back to the Woodland Trail and eases you out of the preserve.

After that, we decided to go into the woods rather than take the North Trail, which borders the woods. The thicket of tall trees, after having been out in the open for the past half-mile, beckoned us. Near the entrance to the woods, we found a tiny loop called the Ash Trail off to the right. A charming placard at the entrance informs travelers that Boy Scout Troop 243, and specifically a boy named Tyler Allum, was in charge of creating this inviting trail in 2010. The Ash Trail takes you for a lovely stroll around a grove of ash trees. One such tree looked like it had been split in half by lightning (or old age) so that the tree curved downward until the tips met the ground, forming a wondrous arch to walk under. All of the different trail options definitely make for a captivating adventure.

Once we enjoyed the Ash Trail, we hiked through the sunny woods on the Woodland Trail, bending down to watch a spider make a thin web and stopping to listen to the birds. Since this is such a quiet and seemingly obscure spot, I can easily imagine bird watchers spending hours here. After feeling like the only two people on the earth in a beautiful woodland utopia, we crossed paths with a jogger, but she turned up another path, leaving the Wetland Trail clear for us to explore.

A wooden boardwalk took us to a bench where we watched the sun’s rays dance over the wetlands. This was a pond encircled by trees, grasses, and reeds. The trail back to the entrance continued to awe us as the terrain expanded and grew into hills filled with many different species of trees. The Wetland Trail meanders around the pond in a U-shape, and if you continue to the left of the wetlands, you’ll find yourself on the High Bluff Trail, which offers a more difficult hiking experience. If you’re not up for a hilly hike, the Wetland Trail connects back to the Woodland Trail and eases you out of the preserve.

As with most nature preserves, horses are not allowed, and the signage at Cherry Hill was compelled to reiterate that to the public. The preserve is open daily from dawn to dusk. Camping, hunting, ground fires, alcohol and illegal substances, weapons, fireworks, littering and dumping, and unauthorized vehicles are not allowed. These rules have allowed Cherry Hill Nature Preserve to become the sanctuary that it is, a pocket of woodland delight that will leave you with both a sense of peace and adventure.

Cherry Hill Nature Preserve is located at 6375 Cherry Hill Road, Superior Charter Township, MI 48198. You can find directions and information online at, superiortownship.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Cherry-Hill-Nature-Preserve.pdf

Saginaw Forest

As we left the pavilion behind, the everyday noises of modern civilization melted away as the birds chimed in.

The School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan is responsible for our next revitalizing outing. Saginaw Forest was a gift to the University of Michigan in 1903 by University Regent Arthur Hill. A map at the trailhead displays the 80-acre parcel of land, and there are similar maps available throughout the woods. Tall grasses greet you as you walk toward a pavilion housing four simple picnic tables, trash and recycling bins.

As we left the pavilion behind, the everyday noises of modern civilization melted away as the birds chimed in. We watched two baby squirrels chase each other up and down a mossy tree. The dirt trail gets a little more difficult here as you enter a slight decline into the woods—watch out for roots, sticks, and fallen branches.

We were greeted by a collage of green leaves and gray-brown bark, the sunlight giving depth to the scene that looked so much like a painting.

Older trees farther down the trail remind you of the care and preservation of this forest. We were greeted by a collage of green leaves and gray-brown bark, the sunlight giving depth to the scene that looked so much like a painting. Looking down the decline, the path descends deep into the dense forest beyond. Many tree species are planted in groups, like conifers, maples, and deciduous hardwood stands. Another interesting tree here is Murray’s Birch. The website for the Saginaw Forest states that, “Saginaw Forest is one of only two known sites in the world of the rare Murray’s Birch (Betula murryana), discovered and named by U-M forest ecologist, Burt Barnes.” Not only does Saginaw Forest offer grand views, but tiny details of elegance as well, like small flowers with thin petals of washed-out purple and the smell of decomposing logs covered with moist, delicately feathered moss.

As we left the pavilion behind, the everyday noises of modern civilization melted away as the birds chimed in.

This forest functions as a field site for students studying soil, forest, and lake ecologies. Third Sister Lake, a small body of water contained within Saginaw Forest, is the subject of a fascinating study if you're interested in how natural habitats are altered by increasingly urbanized contexts. The chloride in parking lot de-icing salts has resulted in meromixis, which means Third Sister Lake has very little dissolved oxygen—there is scarce life in the water in the form of aquatic animals, the food chain has been ruined by the chloride run off—but that doesn't mean the woods surrounding the lake aren't thriving with life.

We turned right down the trail, which took us to the wetlands. A wooden boardwalk allowed us passage through a forest of reeds taller than we were. Then, the path split into two, the right path ran alongside the border of the forest and around a stand of historic white pines. The path to the left took us to a clearing by Third Sister Lake, a red dragonfly trailing behind us. We soaked up the sunshine by the still lake.

I closed my eyes and thought about how beautiful harmony can be between man and nature. Then I opened my eyes to see the chloride-filled lake and felt remorse. All we can do is fight for healthier spaces and appreciate those moments of harmony we can find.

The rest of our walk was a relaxed stroll through the trees. Another loop presented itself, smaller than the last, only about 300 feet before merging back with the main path. In another 400 feet, there were three trail options: complete the circle around the lake to the left, or take one of the other two paths deeper into the forest. One led almost in a direct line to the service entrance of the forest. The other was a 0.5-mile loop through the thick trees. No matter where you go in this forest, you'll find that the trees breathe life into you.

This trailhead was established as a partnership between the University of Michigan and 2|42 Community Church, and as such, visitors are welcome to use the bathroom and refill water bottles at the 2|42 Community Center, which is open from 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Sundays. Saginaw Forest is open from dawn to dusk daily. Your dog can come with you on this trip too, however, there are no facilities to dispose of pet waste. You'll have to bring your own leash and poo bags if you want to bring your fuzzy walking buddy! The University of Michigan asks that you do not venture off of the trails. Bicycles are not allowed on or off the trails. Alcohol, fires, camping, and outdoor cooking are banned. There is also no fishing or swimming in Third Sister Lake.

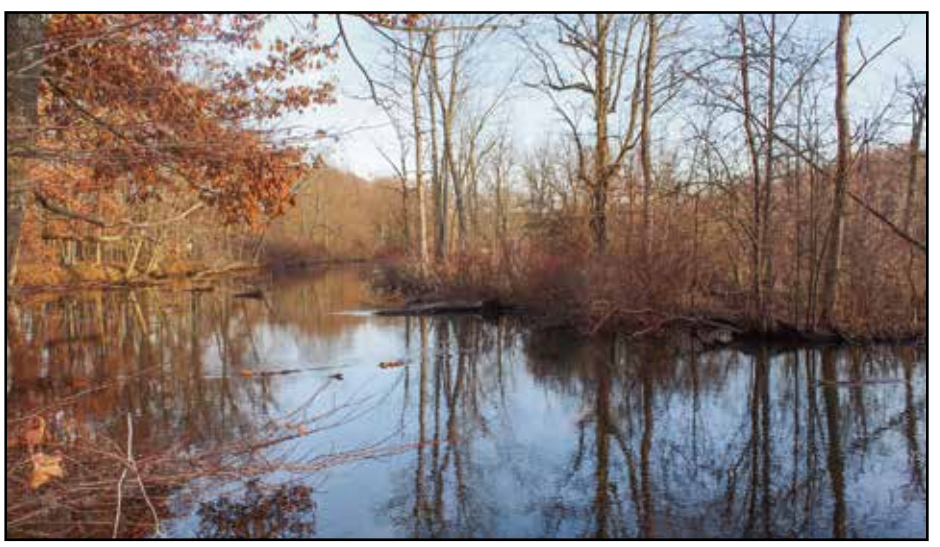
The entrance to the Saginaw Forest trail neighbors 2|42 Community Center, located at 648 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, so there's plenty of parking. Learn more about Saginaw Forest online at seas.umich.edu/research/field_research_sites/saginaw_forest.

Nan Weston Nature Preserve

The foot trail led us into the forest where a thick blanket of leaves covered the ground.

My dad was my walking companion for my third expedition. Nan Weston Nature Preserve at Sharon Hollow is a bit of a drive if you live in Ann Arbor, but it's well worth it if you are in desperate need of solitude and quiet.

When we approached the trailhead, there were several signs. One advertised that no pets are allowed on the preserve. Another informed that the property is open to deer hunting in September—January, but only with written consent from the Nature Conservancy. Another sign charmingly offered an audio tour you can download on your phone while you walk. Since I was looking forward to the quiet of Sharon Hollow, I turned down its offer, but I love the idea of getting people more engaged with the history of a natural space by using audio tours and may listen next time I visit.



Eventually, we made it to the curved bank of the River Raisin. This river streams for almost 139 miles through several southeastern Michigan counties before flowing into Lake Erie.

Sometimes a meticulously polished outdoor space like we have in the city is not what our soul craves. The foot trail led us into the forest where a thick blanket of leaves covered the ground. The crunch beneath my feet made me happy to be in my hometown again. There are no planes or cars here. My dad remarked that he doesn't even hear many animals when he visits, no matter the season. A hunter we met on the trail contradicted him and said the most common animals here are turkeys and deer, though we didn't see any on our hike.

After crossing a small clearing with power lines running above our heads, we found a boardwalk forming a safe path over the creeks that form on the forest floor after a good rain. In the springtime, the creeks become more substantial than they were when my dad and I visited. The boardwalk guided us for about a quarter of a mile before the trail returned to a footpath. The terrain was hilly and plenty of roots grabbed for my feet, but the view of the trees and the peace of being in the moment was overpowering. On top of a small hill, we found the long trail that leads to the River Raisin, which makes a loop of about a half mile before returning to the main path. You can hardly see where the trail diverges at first, but if you want your leisurely walk to last even longer, take this path. You'll see many oddly shaped trees and nooks where you could easily imagine a fairy living. Bright green moss covered fallen logs like carpet. Further on, dark grapevines hung down from high branches, making me feel like I'd entered another world.

Eventually, we made it to the curved bank of the River Raisin. This river streams for almost 139 miles through several southeastern Michigan counties before flowing into Lake Erie. The hike's destination invites you to rest and gaze at the waterway after the mile-long walk. When I came here as a child, strapped with a backpack filled with snacks and water, the hike was an intrepid endeavor where I struggled to keep up with my dad. Returning after so many years, the long, tiresome trek I remembered was almost funny because I realized it's only a mile walk. But the feeling of whimsy and exploration had not left as I reentered this wondrous place.

Sit down in the clearing by the river and connect to the earth (because there are no picnic tables or benches), maybe even have a snack. The river moves steadily, but it still retains a mirror-like quality, reflecting the trees that stand at the edge of the bank like they're about to dive in as I used to after fishing.

In mid-spring, the preserve boasts of over 260 species of wildflowers and other native plants, like large-flowered trillium, southern blue flag iris, starflower, and Dutchman's breeches. Nan Weston Nature Preserve serves as a stopover habitat for yellow warblers, rose-breasted grosbeaks, barred owls, and pileated woodpeckers. Keep an eye on the preserve's high treetops as spring courses through the forest. The Conservancy is working on expanding the path, soon visitors will be able to walk in a circle back to the parking lot, but for now, walk back the way you came and appreciate the woods all over again.

The trail is marked with diamond-shaped trail markers. Yellow markers also identify the borders of the property. Go farther and you'll be on private property, which is not permitted. The Conservancy also asks that you refrain from using motorized vehicles or bicycles, bringing pets, hunting without a permit, camping, smoking, making a fire, collecting firewood, littering, and removing anything within the preserve.

Nan Weston Nature Preserve at Sharon Hollow is located on Easudes Road in Manchester, MI. You can find out more about this nature preserve by visiting: nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/

Random Acts of Kindness

Saved By the Squirrels

By Madeline Diehl

From the moment I woke up, I knew it was going to be a bad day. Not because it was a Monday, though that didn't help. And the cold rain pelting against my windows didn't help, either. No, I knew that it was guaranteed to be a Very Bad Day because I had slept through my alarm clock and woke up two hours late. I'm in business for myself so normally my boss would have cut me some slack, but on this particular Monday, I was on deadline to write an article and hand it in by 5 p.m.—just seven hours away. I didn't have a first draft and hadn't even decided on a topic yet. Sometimes, with the help of adrenaline, I can wing it, but I was sure that I wouldn't be able to this time.

From the moment I woke up, I knew it was going to be a bad day. Not because it was a Monday, though that didn't help.

Why? Because I was writing for a client who expects me to write funny, or at least entertaining, articles. Strangely enough, I find it's impossible to write funny things when I am depressed, and all the bad things that were happening in the world had started to make me depressed. So, how was I going to write something funny in seven hours when I had no idea where to start? I didn't feel like I had a funny bone in my whole body.

Procrastination can sometimes serve as a friend to creativity. While I was eating a quick breakfast, I felt the need to know the answer to this question: why is a "funny bone" called that when hitting it causes pain? The answer to that, in fact, suddenly seemed even more important than my deadline. So, I looked it up on Google, and Google said something like:

Sorry! We can't find that site! Maybe it doesn't exist anymore, or maybe you're just plain stupid! Try again in three seconds, two seconds, one second…Ooops! There's a problem! Try again in nine seconds, eight seconds…

Which of course meant that my modem was out. At that point, my attitude went from bad to worse. I tried searching for the phone number for my service provider, but of course I couldn't get access to their website.

At that point, my attitude went from bad to worse.

How was I going to find all of the potentially funny details about the funny subject I hadn't yet discovered?

I can see now that I could have turned things around at this point, if only I had remembered to meditate, which I usually do for 20 minutes before breakfast. When I meditate, everything that happens during the day seems to happen for a reason, and I can easily find my way through seemingly daunting obstacles. But when I don't meditate, everything seems glass-half-empty, and all the data I collect through the day proves that this assessment is correct. For example, after I started cussing, my cat, who is usually a source of great solace and comfort, hid under the couch and did not venture out again for the rest of the day. "*See?"* my Bad Attitude said. "*How bad is that*?"

Luckily, some still-enlightened part of me realized I could call my cable company from my neighbor's phone. And low and behold, when I stepped outside, I saw a repair truck parked on the street just outside my house. A man wearing a uniform was jotting down notes on a clipboard. "Hi!" I said with something like hope. "So, you must know my modem is down. When do you think it will be back up?"
"I'm just fixing your neighbor's service right now," he said. (He didn't want me to use his real name, so let's call him Doug.) "Do you have a claim ticket?"

I meditate, everything that happens during the day seems to happen for a reason, and I can easily find my way through seemingly daunting obstacles.

I explained how I couldn't find a number to call to file a report, so he gave it to me and told me he couldn't work on my problem unless, and until, I had a claim number. "I just don't understand why you can't just fix my service when you're literally right in front of my house already, probably working on the same problem."

"Well, it's not that simple," Doug said. "You see, I have to go away for about an hour for lunch."

"Well, I certainly don't want you to miss your lunch!" I said sarcastically.
Doug instructed me to look over at a nearby tree where a squirrel was chattering and flicking its tail frantically. "That's why I'm here. That squirrel has chewed up our line."

Doug instructed me to look over at a nearby tree where a squirrel was chattering and flicking its tail frantically.

I showed my ignorance by asking why it wouldn't get electrocuted doing that.

"We're talking about the communication line. Yeah, if she chewed on the electric line, the highest one up, she'd get a big surprise. Nobody knows why, but some squirrels just love to chew on telephone lines. Bell Labs even did a study on it and couldn't even find the reason—they think it has something to do with the electromagnetic field."

Doug explained that the squirrel had also built a nest in a hub, a rectangular black box that was attached to the line above, which measured about three feet long and about a foot across. Hubs are the perfect place for a squirrel to build a nest because they're the same size as a hole in a tree, and there are no predators that can climb up a telephone poll. Most squirrels build at least two nests each season, so they have a back-up if one is put in danger. Whenever he finds a nest in a hub, he just

Contrary to my first impression, it had been a truly wonderful day, and I knew that, no matter what else was going on in the world, I could welcome more wonders into my life tomorrow, and the next day, and the next.

needs to go away for an hour or so and the mother squirrel will do his job for him and move her babies to the back-up nest. When I asked how, Doug said: "Our lines are their sidewalks. Just watch and don't get too close."

Hearing about the squirrels helped my Bad Attitude start to slip away—until I tried to reach customer service. With each attempt, I was given the run-around by at least three different "customer service" representatives, and then the line would go dead. By the time Doug got back, I was livid and very close to yelling—okay, maybe I *was* yelling. Doug sat next to me on my front steps, held out his hand for the phone, and after I gave it to him, he said something like:

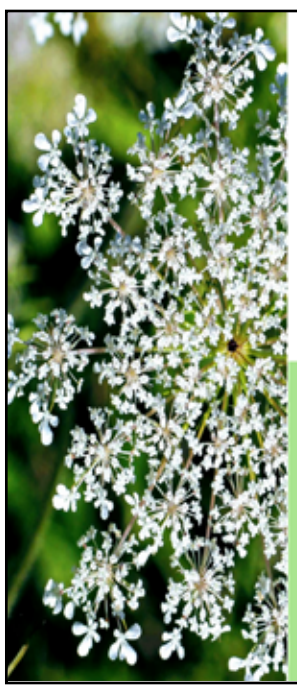
> "Hello. This is Doug. I work for [company name]. My badge number is xxxxx. I'm here at a customer's house and I need a work order. Could you give me one, please? (Pause.) I was already at her neighbor's house at [address] to fix the line and it will only take me a few moments to fix this customer's, too. (Pause.) No. You don't understand. I *am* the repairman. I *work* for [company name]. My *badge number* is xxxxxx. I'm already *at* the customer's house. (Pause.) Yes, thank you. I'll put her on the line."

Watching how calm and respectful Doug was on the phone, I felt horrible that I had allowed myself to become so hostile to the people at the call center who no doubt had little, if any, control over what they said and did. Now, with Doug's help, I got my work order within minutes. Before starting up the ladder, Doug asked me: "Did the mama squirrel get all her babies out? There were three."

With a sinking feeling, I realized that I had let myself get so upset on the phone that I had missed the most important part of the day—watching a mother squirrel carry her babies one by one by the scruff of their necks across the street to a safer nest. When Doug climbed the ladder he reported that the nest was empty, and he set about the task of cleaning out the hub.

After Doug left, I felt my heart open up again as I reflected on his compassion toward the squirrels, and the mama squirrel's noble feat, and Doug's compassion toward me in helping me navigate the perilous world of "customer service." I sat down at my desk knowing I now had the topic for my article, and my cat even came out from under the couch and lay across my computer keys to help me, like she always does. Contrary to my first impression, it had been a truly wonderful day, and I knew that, no matter what else was going on in the world, I could welcome more wonders into my life tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. I decided I would let other writers take care of writing about all the bad news—I could just always be on the lookout for everyday miracles.

A NOTE TO READERS: Just as you have probably guessed, or have always known, the "funny bone" is not a bone, it's a nerve located on the inside of the elbow joint. There is no definitive explanation for how it got its name, but some speculate that it's because the nerve also runs through the humerus bone in your upper arm. And no, I'm not joking.



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OUT OF MY *Comfort Zone*

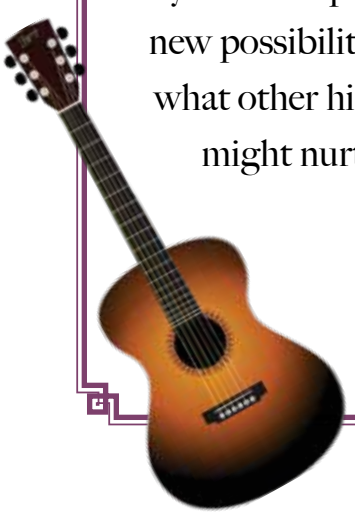
By Diane Majeske • Photos by Mary Bortmas

Crazy Wisdom Journal asked a number of leaders in southeastern Michigan's conscious living community to reflect upon times in their lives that they've left their comfort zones to venture out in new ways. In the distant past or much more recently, we asked, what did you do, what inspired you, did it change you, inside or outside, big or little? Did you attend a new class, take an adventurous trip, go skydiving, stretch beyond a long entrenched boundary, start a new relationship or end an old one, take a leap, retire, join the Peace Corps, go on a night trek in the wilderness, or just do something way out of your ordinary?

We received quite a variety of interesting and sometimes illuminating answers. Some of them went deep, looking back upon the journey of life and how it unfolded. Others selected examples from everyday life of stepping gingerly out to try something new. Rather than publish them all at once, we'll be sharing two or three per issue. In this issue, we start off with essays by Sandy Finkel and Dennis Chernin.

SANDY FINKEL: LEAVING COMFORT TO FIND THE MUSIC INSIDE

Sandra Finkel is a founding board member of the Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education. She leads stress management workshops and classes and is an Ann Arbor business owner.



This experience has enriched my life and opened me up to new possibilities. I wonder what other hidden talent I might nurture next?

This past spring, I took my first guitar lesson *ever*. I love to sing and wanted to be able to accompany myself, but I'd never played a musical instrument before, don't know how to read music, and had so many excuses for not attempting to learn—everything from my short fingers to being too old… I'm 63.

I was arranging guitar lessons for my husband as a holiday gift this winter and his teacher, Ann Doyle, mentioned that she especially liked to teach adult beginners. That sparked the possibility for me. It took me awhile to get my nerve up, build up callouses, and learn a few chords to start. Then I found some songs with chords I could play (D, Em, A, G, C), had my first lesson with Ann, and then it was all about practicing.

I discovered to my surprise, that I have really enjoyed the whole process. I actually like to practice and do so most days. I started with sufficiently low expectations so I didn't get frustrated with the lag time between chord changes or the coordination and rhythm needed to keep a strumming pattern. I was amazed at how quickly I was able to play chords, strum, and sing. Each time I think I've got a song down, Ann throws a new challenge at me, so I'm continually stretching and growing. I have learned quite a few songs, several strumming patterns, two different finger picking patterns, and many more chords. I didn't even think I'd learn to finger pick in the first year!

This experience has enriched my life and opened me up to new possibilities. I wonder what other hidden talent I might nurture next? This past June I had an opportunity to perform a song on guitar to an audience at an adult camp I attended. I'd been playing for less than three months, but I wanted to inspire others who always wanted to play an instrument. It's not too hard, and never too late, to learn!

DR. DENNIS CHERNIN: TAKING A BIG RISK—SEEING A LIFELONG PAYOFF

Dennis K. Chernin received his M.D. and M.P.H. from the U of M, and is board certified in preventive medicine. He currently practices holistic and family medicine using nutrition, yoga, meditation therapies and homeopathy, and is also the medical director of two county public health departments.

Dr. Chernin is a certified yoga teacher, teaches and studies Chinese martial arts, and is a lead singer, harmonium player and co-founder of a kirtan group, Ann Arbor Kirtan.

He is the author of several books including The Complete Homeopathic Resource for Common Illnesses, How to Meditate Using Chakras, Mantras and Breath and the soon-to-be-published My Path: From Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine.

In the heat of the summer of 1976, I moved to the Himalayan institute, a yoga ashram, on the outskirts of metropolitan Chicago. It was a decision that would lead me to step well out of my comfort zone and radically impact my life's journey. I was a young physician at the time, freshly out of medical residency and eager to study the ancient wisdom inherent in India's meditative traditions as well as the healing arts of homeopathy and Ayurveda. During this four and a half-year sojourn at the ashram, I immersed myself in the study of esoteric yogic practices, explored the science of nutrition and vegetarianism, and delved deeply into the art of homeopathic medicine. It was a most interesting and exciting time, setting the stage for who I am today.

To move to an organization that had an Indian yogi and homeopathic physician, Swami Rama, as its spiritual head, was a huge decision. I had read articles about Swami Rama and finally met him in 1976. He had shown that he could control involuntary body functions and brain wave patterns. This included voluntarily putting his heart in ventricular tachycardia (a type of abnormal heart rhythm), changing the temperature by ten degrees on opposite sides of the same palm, and maintaining active awareness in the delta EEG wave pattern, the brain wave pattern associated with deep sleep. In my quest to understand his amazing abilities and explore different states of consciousness, I was delighted to have the opportunity to closely study with him.

> How could her accomplished son, with so much potential to be an admired physician, throw it all away?

When I moved to the ashram, my mother was aghast. How could her accomplished son, with so much potential to be an admired physician, throw it all away? She was concerned that I was being brain-washed by a nefarious cult. My father and sister were a bit more curious but also wished I would practice Western medicine.

So, the obvious question is why I took such a risk of censure from family, and possibly community as well, in making the decision to practice homeopathic medicine and add yoga and meditation into the mix. In general, I have never been a great risk-taker. I have never wanted to parachute out of planes or climb dangerous rock faces and was not an intrepid world explorer. But I did choose, with some preliminary hesitation, an unconventional career as a physician combining Eastern transcendental and Western scientific approaches to medicine, which some would have considered to be risky from a professional perspective.

It is with some irony that I made this decision as I do love modern Western-based medicine! From a personal health perspective, if not for excellent surgical intervention, I might have died at age seven from a ruptured appendix. I would have lived my entire adult life completely blind if not for bilateral cataract surgery at age 25.

> As I continued my studies, I had an epiphany: why not integrate my burning desire for spiritual growth and keen interest in meditation with my intense desire to serve as a physician?

To understand why this decision was so transformative as well as challenging, some contextual backdrop is important. I was an ordinary middle-class Jewish kid from Cleveland, minding my own business but also a bit of a know-it-all. I spent quite a bit of time in my youth dealing with the sadness and confusion from my parent's breakup and studying hard so that I could get into a good college and eventually go to medical school. I also spent lots of time enjoying being a jock—playing high school basketball and baseball.

When I was a little kid, I knew that I wanted to be a doctor. Along with this inner drive to become a physician, for as long as I can remember, I also had a deep desire to fathom the unknown. I had close friends throughout junior high and high school, and we would often talk about the infinite nature of the cosmos and whether we believed in God as a person or something more expansive. Those were fun discussions, and I guess I'm still asking the same questions today. As a pre-med student I majored in cultural anthropology at Northwestern University. I was fascinated to discover that people from different cultures looked at their lives in vastly different ways, especially in indigenous societies. Their approach to healthcare and disease treatment varied widely.

I was fairly strait-laced in college. I worked diligently so that I could get the grades necessary to get into a good medical school. I seldom drank alcohol and didn't touch pot while at Northwestern. It was the late 60s, so this seems surprising in retrospect. It was the Vietnam era, and I did my share of campus protesting.

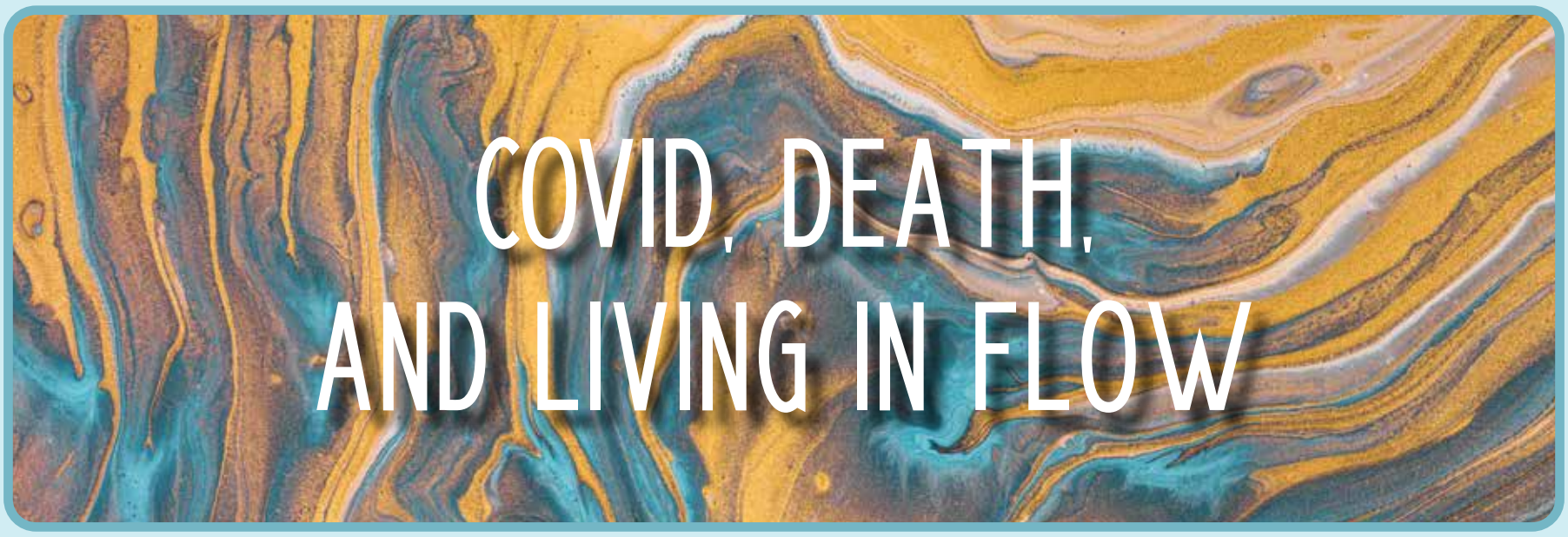
I went to the University of Michigan Medical School where I let my hair down, so to speak, but I still played it pretty safe. I did, however, grow my hair very long, so that by the time I graduated it was down to the middle of my back, while my bushy beard was down to the middle of my chest. In fact, when I did my surgery rotation, the attending surgeons made me wear three surgical masks, one over my mouth and nose and two over my beard. I was quite a sight!

My journey into the world of spirit, meditation, and healing actually began without conscious awareness, years before meeting Swami Rama. As a young child I had terrible dizzy spells, especially at school. These spells were frequent when my parents were going through their divorce. Then one night, I discovered that by slowing down and smoothing out my breath, I was able to stop the dizziness. When many years later, I was reading about breathing exercises in yoga, I was surprised and delighted to find out that I had spontaneously started practicing breathing exercises as a child, and that I had discovered the power inherent in these techniques.

Another important influence on my spiritual path came from my early exploration of different spiritual traditions. During the Holocaust, many of the great Jewish spiritual leaders lost their lives. We post-war children were looking to move away from the relative conformity of Reformed and Conservative Judaism. In earlier years, I did explore meditative approaches and more spiritually-based practices of Judaism. I found, however, that the great philosophies and traditions of India were inspiring and had a particular appeal to me. The techniques of meditation were presented in a concise, systematic, and thorough way.

As I continued my studies, I had an epiphany: why not integrate my burning desire for spiritual growth and keen interest in meditation with my intense desire to serve as a physician? I am very grateful for this decision and to have had a holistic medical practice for 43 years, integrating Western evidence-based medicine, homeopathy, meditation, yoga, and nutritional medicine.

Here I am, many years later, still working and loving what I do. I look back at my decision to step out of my comfort zone and smile. Knowing that the ride has been pure joy.



COVID, DEATH, AND LIVING IN FLOW

By Larissa Czuchnowsky

I just got off the phone with my mom and sisters discussing funeral arrangements for my father. He has COVID and he is dying. For the last days, we have been having zoom calls for several hours with him by the grace and compassion of the Canadian field hospital staff who make an iPad available for us each day. We sing, we read poems, meditations, and prayers, and share everything from our heart that we want him to hear. He is not responding and he is breathing the way dying people do: with big gaps of not breathing followed by a few shallow breaths in a row. We know however, that dying people hear everything being said to them so we don't shy away from giving him our song and deep communication.

IT IS AS NATURAL TO DIE AS IT IS TO BE BORN.

—Francis Bacon

I am sad that my Dad is dying and I cry when the grief hits me… and when I'm not, I feel so happy that he is dying with love, beauty, and openness. My family and I have intentionally put our panic and fear to the side and have called in presence, wonder, and possibility to guide us. This attitude allows us to feel the profound healing happening in our family, between the siblings and our Mom, and for our Dad. You see, death does not get its due veneration and understanding in our culture. It is seen only for what it takes away and we lose the perennial opportunity and gift that it always offers us. Modern culture generally denies death's naturalness and inevitability and this in turn disallows its rightful title as the ultimate teacher and heart opener.

"THINKING AND TALKING ABOUT DEATH NEED NOT BE MORBID; THEY MAY BE QUITE THE OPPOSITE. IGNORANCE AND FEAR OF DEATH OVERSHADOW LIFE, WHILE KNOWING AND ACCEPTING DEATH ERASES THIS SHADOW."

—Lily Pincus

Death is powerful and inevitable, yet we argue with the reality of it, avoid, deny, and expend vast amounts of energy, futilely trying to keep it at bay. Huge sectors of our culture and economy are dedicated to running from the fear of our own death and aging. It's like trying to stop the sun from setting—we just can't do it. Death comes for us all and terminal illness and death—when we open to its mystery, power, and benign wisdom—can be used as a healing and magical experience.

I hold this view of death as I sense the anxiety of my fellow citizens in stores, and I read news and magazine articles, and feel the fright jumping out from the pages. Our fear of COVID and hence, of death, is written sky large. It's scary to get sick and to lose a loved one. We all want to continue living our lives and want our loved ones to be with us, but the level of high alert and edginess can make us sick in other ways. Is it possible to relax once we have done our due diligence of hand washing, distancing, and mask-wearing, and trust that life will bring what it will bring? As unintuitive as it sounds, illness and death can be the most healing experience someone has, even though it ends in their passing. I can truly say this from experience. Almost two years ago, I sat vigil with my husband in the same way that I just did with my Dad.

"DEATH IS A CHALLENGE. IT TELLS US NOT TO WASTE TIME. IT TELLS US TO TELL EACH OTHER RIGHT NOW THAT WE LOVE EACH OTHER."

—Leo Buscaglia

I have lost people I love the most and I can tell you, there is a way to engage with death and the dying process where you receive gifts that you never thought imaginable. I am not saying it's easy because it's heart breaking. I'm just saying that there is an opportunity in the inevitable that we are missing and wasting as a culture.

So, when you are ready, sit quietly, breathe, and courageously notice your fear of loss, your fear of not seeing a loved one, and put your hand on your heart. If you are like me, the first time you do this, you might feel panicked. Just breathe and feel your feet on the ground. You are safe, our ancestors have been dealing with death and loss forever, and we are here. Trust that death will come bearing gifts even though it's sad and we will be faced with our loneliness and human mortality. Death points us to the fact that there truly is no ground. We are all making up this thing called life as we go along!

Living in "not knowing" and mystery is not something we are trained to do. But Covid and the specter of death surrounding it are causing us to do this. Through meditation, inquiry, and deliberate examination, we can learn to lean in, trust, and cease our fight with reality. As the phrase goes that Jon Kabat Zinn made popular, "You can't stop the waves but I can learn to surf." Now is a good time to go with the flow.

Larissa Czuchnowsky is a meditation teacher, a Conscious Living and Dying Coach and an empowered and widowed mother of two. Visit her at www.thewisdomheartcoaching.com.

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Plant Medicine and Magic

By Sarah Williams

When people ask what drew me to herbalism, there are two stories that I tell. One is of my time working in the Mojave desert, where my boss—a botanist by training—would point out various native plants and tell me snippets of how the indigenous people of the area used them for food or medicine (he always spoke of this in the past tense). For him, it was an interesting tidbit of information, but I thought, "couldn't we still?" This story is true, but the deeper truth goes back many years, to my childhood.

This story is true, but the deeper truth goes back many years, to my childhood.

Unlike some herbalists, I didn't grow up roaming the woods and fields, learning plant medicine at my grandmother's knee. We lived in a modest city neighborhood, and while my parents gardened and took us to the parks, the plants that surrounded us remained largely an anonymous green backdrop of our daily lives. Tomatoes and tulips were about the extent of our botanical knowledge or interest.

But in the evenings, as we settled in for bed, my dad would tell us stories. Most often, he would read to us from the great fantasy epics of the time: *The Hobbit, Lord of the Rings,* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. I would listen, enthralled, as he described dryads dancing in the moonlight, journeys through strange lands, navigating by rivers and ancient ruins, kings curing a deadly affliction with a wild-growing plant, animals that spoke words of wisdom or warning, elves that sang to the stars and remembered the making of mountains. I couldn't have said, at the time, why these images exerted such a strong pull on my young psyche. I only knew that they warmed my heart and made me feel both hopeful and fearless.

The years passed, and I outgrew bedtime stories. I earned my degree, started a career, and bought a house. I was a proper adult—life was perhaps less whimsical than it had been, but I was secure and reasonably content. And then one day, I picked up a copy of Herb Quarterly that someone had left lying on a table. It didn't take long for me to be drawn in. I had always loved nature, and studied it scientifically, but this was something different. It was somehow familiar—this easy, practical intimacy with plants and the natural world. As I read, immersing myself in each article, I felt the awakening of an old feeling: joy and hope and courage and a powerful curiosity. It was the feeling of magic that those stories had stirred in me

They held great power and seemingly limitless possibility, drawn not from their own cleverness or strength (though they had those too), but from their deep understanding of—and relationship with—the natural world.

years ago—the feeling that I had thought must be left behind with the innocence of childhood.

Looking back, I can see why the characters in those tales fascinated me so. They held great power and seemingly limitless possibility, drawn not from their own cleverness or strength (though they had those too), but from their deep understanding of—and relationship with—the natural world. In respectful partnership with the earth itself, the plants and animals, they could never be truly lost or defeated, nor were they ever alone. Now, here was that same magic in real life, available to each of us so long as we are willing to listen and learn. This, I believe, is a large part of the healing that herbal medicine offers us, as individuals and as a people—the power of connection, the power of belonging in the world.

Of course, there are strictly physical, biochemical aspects as well that are quite important and worth knowing. As conventional medicine becomes less accessible for many, not to mention fraught with errors, knowing how to tend to our own health is a valuable skill. However, the practice of herbalism encompasses so much more. The root of much of what plagues us is loneliness, helplessness, and fear. The reasons that these are so prevalent in our society are many and varied, and beyond

While we appreciate the lessons of the age of enlightenment, our souls long for the wonder and wild knowing that somehow got left along the way.

the scope of this essay, but we are now, it seems, at the turning of the tide.

We have grown weary of separation, and discovered the limitations of rationalism. While we appreciate the lessons of the age of enlightenment, our souls long for the wonder and wild knowing that somehow got left along the way. Herbalism is one path by which we may find this again. The same part of us that remembers the magic of moonlight and stories around campfires, remembers the plants as food and medicine, yes, as well as companions and caretakers for uncounted generations. The old traditions of healing not only soothe our bodies and minds, they connect us to our ecosystems, to our ancestors, and not least, to each other. Our community, though growing, is still small, and we know how precious each kindred spirit is. We cherish the culture of integrity and care and are grateful to be among healers. As together we rediscover the magic of our world, and our own innate potential within it, we are finding our way toward completeness. As the elders now say, the plants are calling us home.

Sarah Williams has been studying and practicing plant medicine for the past 15 years. She is a wildcrafter, gardener, clinician, teacher, potion-maker and—always—a student. She is the herbalist behind Willow Moon Botanicals in Toledo, OH and a founding organizer of the Great Lakes Herb Faire. Find more information about the Great Lakes Herb Fair at greatlakesherbfaire.org. Visit Williams online at willowmoonbotanicals.weebly.com or email her at sarah17.williams@gmail.com.

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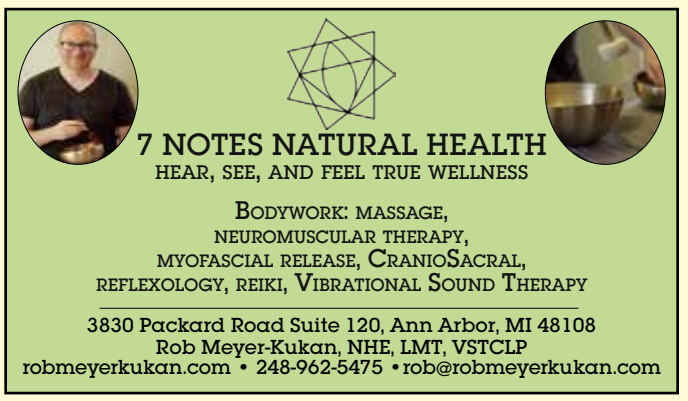

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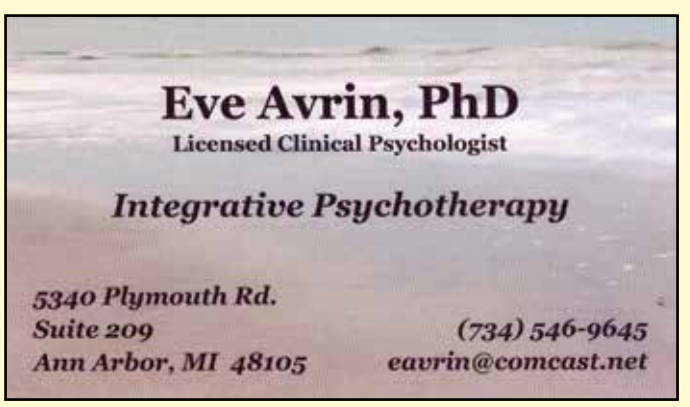

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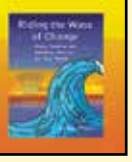

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In this column, Crysta Coburn writes about crazywisdom-esque people and happenings around Ann Arbor.

When I was asked to take over this column in 2014, I had no idea where it would take me. It goes without saying that I have met some amazing, passionate, and creative people. Some have become friends and touched my life in ways beyond the scope of my column.

Nicole Marinette Bedy (Spring 2015) performed a house cleansing when my now-husband and I purchased our first home. Jen Mullins (formerly Gossett) of Fairytale Baked Goods (Spring 2016) made the scones at our wedding, which people still talk about over three years later.

> Some have become friends and touched my life in ways beyond the scope of my column.

In celebration of the Crazy Wisdom Community Journal's 25th anniversary, I wanted to look back and check in with some of the people featured in the Crysta Goes Visiting column. I hope our readers enjoy seeing where they are now as much as I did!

Kerstin Woodside (Kamala Tree Designs) - Winter 2015

When I first met Kerstin Woodside, she was making and selling her own jewelry under the name Kamala Tree Designs. Since then, KTD has headed in a more floral direction. As Woodside shared with me, "I was involved in a hit and run accident that changed my life in many ways, both physically and mentally. I was having a hard time processing my 'new reality,' and one of the things that brought me great joy was my flowers. Beautiful, locally grown flowers. I loved them so much, in fact, I wanted to keep them forever. This is what inspired me to change directions for KTD and start working with real flowers, preserving them so the beauty lasts forever."

KTD has expanded to include typewriter quotes, wood and flower wall art, smudge bowls, and resin dishes. "It has been a real learning experience for me," she continued, "but very rewarding. I have done a few fairs including the Lavender Festival, and I am in Artistica in Dexter. Although my health continues to hold me back in some ways, and I cannot work on my art as much as I would like, part of what I have learned is that it is ok. That is a good lesson for all of us."

> I was having a hard time processing my 'new reality,' and one of the things that brought me great joy was my flowers.

Visit www.facebook.com/KamalaTreeDesigns/ to see KTD's latest designs. Artistica Gallery is located at 3203 Broad Street in Dexter, Michigan.

Kristin Anne Danko (Neighborhood Theatre Group) - Winter 2016

This interview has had the biggest impact on my life. After speaking with Kristin Anne Danko and being introduced to Neighborhood Theatre Group, I slowly became involved in theatre for the first time. After performing in a few of the Black Cat Cabaret shows, my husband is now NTG's technical director while I am an ensemble member. I served as dramaturg for the play Thoughts and Prayers (February/March 2020) and the sketch comedy show Headlines (TBD). NTG is also producing a staged reading of my husband's musical Benestopheles!: The Last Days of Ghoulita Graves (music by Tom Hett) in 2021.

Kristin Anne Danko

Now starting its sixth season, Danko filled me in on NTG's progress. "NTG has grown to an ensemble of 15 theatre artists that work together to create what we call 'theatre from scratch.' We've produced 20 original productions all in Ypsilanti. Our shows range from original plays and musicals, cabarets, sketch comedy shows, and readers theatre. We host an annual monologue competition where local actors perform a three-minute monologue for local directors. Our audience continues to grow as do our artists. It's been extremely rewarding watching Neighborhood Theatre Group expand and I can't wait for the next four years!"

> Our shows range from original plays and musicals, cabarets, sketch comedy shows, and readers theatre.

Due to the pandemic, NTG has moved many of its activities online, such their Virtual 10-minute Play Festival in October. Check ntgypsi.org for more information.

Emily and Corey Russell (Naughty Boy's Rolled Ice Cream) - Fall 2018

It is fitting that we close with one of my favorite desserts—ice cream! Naughty Boy's Rolled Ice Cream is the highlight of local festivals and food truck rallies, and I have been known to attend events based on whether or not the trailer is there. Things have only gotten sweeter since I talked with Emily and Corey Russel.

Corey happily shared the changes with me. "We opened our shop in the Dexter Crossings Shopping Center in July last year…. We still are doing the mobile events but on a smaller scale with mainly one day events and private parties. The shop is allowing us to expand our offerings. We have perfected our hand packed pint recipe over the winter (a lot of fun R&D), which we will be debuting shortly for a more traditional to-go option. We also have started making some novelties such as our yooper bars (our Michigan made version of a Klondike bar) and ice pops, which are made with fresh fruit and our dairy base as well as non-dairy options made with a coconut milk base."

Things have only gotten sweeter since I talked with Emily and Corey Russell.

Visit the new Naughty Boy's Rolled Ice Cream Shop located at 7045 Dexter Ann Arbor Road in Dexter, Michigan. Walk-in, online, and call ahead ordering are all available. Visit www.naughtyboysicecream.com for more information.

Megan Weber (Art by Zaheroux) - Spring 2016

When our beloved cat Sawyer died unexpectedly a few years ago, Megan Weber made a beautiful commissioned memorial art piece. She is an artist my husband and I both keep tabs on. Her skills continue to grow!

"The last five years have been really great!" Weber told me. "I've been able to attend many shows across Michigan. Since 2016 I launched a successful Kickstarter for my third deck of cards, a playing card set titled Corvid Romantic featuring crows. I also now have my work available at various local businesses such as Vault of Midnight in Ann Arbor and Twisted Things in Ypsilanti. Last year, 2019, I was the featured artist for the Saline Celtic Festival, designing the year's logo! Coming up for me, I am continuing to expand my skills with color pencil and trying to attend more art shows and conventions. This year's project is to focus on my tarot deck, Animalis Os Fortuna and taking it further. I hope to have more news soon about this adventure!"

Many events have been canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic. Check www.facebook.com/ArtbyZaheroux/ and its events page for the latest information.

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Healers of Ann Arbor

Marcia Haarer — Realization Process Psychotherapist and Senior Teacher

By Laura K. Cowan

You can try a new type of massage or read a chiropractor's online reviews, but how do you really know when a healing modality is right for you? This new column, from tech and wellness journalist and meditation coach Laura K. Cowan goes in depth with local healers to give you a behind the scenes look at what they really do to help people relax and heal.

(Authors Note: Since childhood, I have searched for healing for everything from migraines, to PTSD, to a severe back injury that was diagnosed as impossible to heal. With each injury or illness, I found a way through with the help of good medical care and many supportive healers—often out of the mainstream—who could help me get my life back. Eventually, I was diagnosed as having PTSD from psychological childhood abuse and a rare connective tissue disorder. My healing journey was long, and I needed a lot of gentle support to calm my body and untangle myself from a lot of harsh situations.

In short, I have had an extremely long road to wellness, and that makes me the person a lot of people come to for advice on certain types of healing modalities that might help their situation. I am not a doctor, but I am a journalist experienced at telling the stories of people's professional expertise in little understood fields from technology to wellness.

On my long healing journey, I worked for a couple of years with a unique therapist I wanted to introduce you to, because her perspective on healing might not only help you, but spark ideas of what is right for your own healing journey. Her name is Marcia Haarer, LMSW, and she labels herself a "Realization Process Therapist." I sat down to talk with her about what this means.)

On my long healing journey, I worked for a couple of years with a unique therapist… Her name is Marcia Haarer. —Laura Cowan

Marcia Haarer told me when we sat down, "I have been a therapist for 40 years, since my first job in community health. Ten years ago, I would have labeled myself a trauma-based therapist or an EMDR therapist." In 2010, Haarer started training with popular life coach Judith Blackstone in her embodiment method. "She is a psychologist who created a set of practices to help people experience the mindful field of consciousness that unites us and everything else in our bodies with the environment," Haarer explained. "In many ways, this is an ordinary sort of thing. Many of us attune to this field in nature. Standing in front of a beautiful tree, one can feel unity with nature, and it's restorative for us."

EMDR is an increasingly popular trauma therapy that allows a practitioner to walk a client through a traumatic memory while working with eye movements to unlock trauma that is frozen in the body. This allows processing and release of tension to heal the trauma rather than just talk about it until it has less emotional charge. EMDR and similar therapies are based in the theory that we somatize or lock traumatic memory into our muscles and bodily structures involved in the traumatic event, and that accessing the memory while performing different types of movement can release that frozen state of overwhelm from the body as well as the mind. It's hard to explain beyond just saying that before this therapy, my memories of the past were loops of near-death experiences and misery and tension, and after, they became part of a smoother narrative of everything I had overcome.

EMDR is an increasingly popular trauma therapy that allows a practitioner to walk a client through a traumatic memory while working with eye movements to unlock trauma that is frozen in the body.

The Realization Process ties into this EMDR or other trauma therapies because it helps the individual have a sort of self-led aha moment that is shepherded by the therapist to happen in a safe space. Haarer explained the concept this way. She once worked with a woman who had been held up at gunpoint, and she felt frozen in fear because at the time it wasn't safe for her to move the gun out of her face. Haarer said that working with her client to realize the power of *not* moving the gun away in that situation to keep herself safe allowed her to regain a sense of agency in her own life. She paired that with practicing moving an artificial gun physically out of her face with her hand to unlock the protective movement in her body, which led to profound relief and the ability to move again in her own life and stand up for herself.

Haarer said that this processing isn't just for fear either. "Sadness can be metabolized," she explained. "I posed this question," Haarer said of one young man she helped. "What if your depression isn't fixed? What if it has an original emotion underneath it?" The young man discovered the feeling had roots in his mother's depression during his childhood. He could visualize connecting with his mother in this unified field of consciousness that connected them through space and time and was able to disentangle her depression from his need to fix it. "He may always feel some sadness about his mother's depression," Haarer said, "but he can also feel love for himself."

Haarer said that, "in a sense, we inherit our parents' traumas. [Add] our own traumas, and we create holding patterns" that we use to cope. "If I make myself invisible, that bully on the playground can't hurt me as much," she said as another example. "Then I make myself invisible as an adult, too."

"In Realization Process therapy, you learn to attune to this mindful field within the vertical core of the body… where we are uniquely ourselves and unified at the same time," Haarer explained. "I find it's the safest space to live from, because it's where we are most resourced…. We don't just live in a field of oxygen—we live in a field of consciousness."

Haarer said her favorite thing about being a therapist is "creating a lasting aha experience with a client."

Haarer said her favorite thing about being a therapist is "creating a lasting aha experience with a client. As a therapist, I am let into the most intimate experiences of a person's life. If in the midst of that suffering and 'stuckness' we can make a connection that the client wasn't aware of before, that she didn't know was possible, then we've created the experience that real change is possible and right here, in this moment."

A good therapy match, according to Haarer, looks like this:

1) You feel like you're working hard.
2) You have a feeling of relief, you feel lighter.
3) There is some sort of aha experience, and you are learning something new about yourself, what's possible, and becoming more skillful.

Marcia Haarer, LMSW, is seeing patients virtually and can be reached by phone at (734) 668-6854. You can learn more about her services at marciahaarer.com.

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Yoga Column

Photo by Hilary Nichols

Namaste, Katie...

Whether you're a seasoned yogi or getting ready to roll out your mat for the first time, here you'll find a variety of useful tips from local yoga instructor, Katie Hoener.

Namaste Katie,

I love Camel Posture, and always try to make room for it in my practice, as I find the heart opening so warming and supportive. I recently tweaked a hip muscle and am unsure how to best modify the posture to keep the benefits flowing! Any advice would be welcome.

Thanks,

Reggie, Ann Arbor

Dear Reggie,

Camel Pose, or Ustrasana, is a beautiful way to open the heart, as you say! It is a tremendous opener for the entire front side of the body, but can be a bit much on certain muscle groups if they are feeling discomfort or have experienced an injury. Luckily for all of us, there are ways to gather in those warm benefits of a Ustrasana in a supportive way that will hopefully allow you to open through the heart and ease your way back into the posture as your body is ready.

Depending on the degree of injury there are a number of variations to explore. To start, come into a kneeling posture, and lift up, so that you are resting on the shins. Inhale with the arms out front, relaxed through the shoulders, and then allow the arms to flow open to a T. This may offer you the opener through the heart that feels good, allows for control over the amount of backbend, and release through the hip flexors. Ask that the abdominals engage during this process to offer support and protection to the muscles of both the lower back and the hips.

If this feels safe, we may wish to progress. We can take the hands to the low back, just above the iliac crests of the pelvis. Drawing the elbows toward one another and lifting through the heart (we want to keep the spine long and lifted here). We have the option here to keep the chin toward the sternum, or can tilt the head back, again with length along the neck. Taking these steps as a starter is a nice way to see if the body is prepared for more.

Luckily for all of us, there are ways to gather in those warm benefits of a Ustrasana in a supportive way…

One way recommended in the Yoga Sutras is to choose a specific object of meditation and draw our focus to that one particular point of intention.

Namaste Katie,

A few months ago, I was shopping and saw a magazine with a headline that said something about Pratyahara being the unsung limb of yoga. I meant to go back, and I forgot, so here I am! Can you tell us a little more about Pratyahara?

Jane, Chelsea

Dear Jane,

Of course, we can talk about Pratyahara! I, personally, am a fan of all the limbs of yoga, and I do understand that some of them get far more attention than others. Pratyahara is the fifth limb of yoga, follows asana, and precedes Dharna. Pratyahara means the withdrawl of the senses, and it is suggested that before we move on to Dharna, Dhyana, and Samadhi (concentration, meditation, and bliss respectively), that we gain control over the senses and the world around us first. These stimuli can distract and overwhelm the mind, making the next steps, or limbs, all the more challenging.

There are many ways that we can practice Pratyahara, and work on limiting that sensory input. All of this with the intention of quieting the mind. One way recommended in the Yoga Sutras is to choose a specific object of meditation and draw our focus to that one particular point of intention. This can be external, such as a candle flame, or a favored object that has a spiritual meaning to you. These can also be internal, the Yoga Sutras suggest drawing the attention to the third eye point, internally.

A lovely practice is to concentrate on one of the five senses (a practice that can take one minute, or five, or more, whatever suits your needs). Find yourself a comfortable seated position. You may have an idea of your focus ahead of time, or as you settle in, you may find yourself drawn in a particular direction. Whether it is sound, taste, sight, touch, or smell, allow yourself to draw your intention and focus to that particular sense, asking the others to fall away as much as possible. See if you can bring yourself into almost a superhero-like engagement with that particular sense. When your time has concluded, take a few moments to see how that connection with the sense brought you toward clarity of mind, as well as improved your concentration, the next limb of yoga!

Namaste Katie,

This winter our family has been passing colds back and forth and back again. I've heard in classes that there are yoga postures that can help. Can you explain? Is there a pose we can do as a family that is not too demanding?

Janissa, Ann Arbor

Dear Janissa,

This winter it did feel like things were continuously being gifted back and forth. There is a correlation to the more time we spend indoors (circulating and breathing the same air), to the more we pass around germs and viruses. And, as you have observed, yoga can support immune function and healing. Our lymph system is entirely dependent on movement for circulation, so maintaining some movement, even in our states of illness, is important to our healing and overall well-being.

A phenomenal series of postures that aid in the movement of lymphatics are twists. There are large collections of lymph glands under the arms, in the gut, and in the groin area, so twists engage more than one of these areas, with the breath enhancing the benefits. To fulfill your second request, a reclined twist is a way to gently get all the benefits of a twist no matter our energy level.

From our backs, we want to plant our feet on the floor, lift up the pelvis, and shift the hips ever so slightly to the right, then we allow the knees to move over to the left. If we are looking for a lower twist, the feet stay on or toward the floor. If we are looking for a higher twist (or the low back is tender) we can pull our knees in toward the torso prior to moving over toward the left. Do not be afraid to use props, as seen in the picture. We want to get cozy and comfortable, so that we can focus on the breath, and on healing!

Our lymph system is entirely dependent on movement for circulation, so maintaining some movement, even in our states of illness, is important to our healing, and overall well-being.

Katie Hoener is an RYT 500, receiving her 200 and 500 hour trainings. She is also a Licensed Master Social Worker and a partner at Verapose Yoga in Dexter (veraposeyoga.com). Please send your own yoga questions to katie@veraposeyoga.com.

THE POWER OF YOGA NIDRA

By Lisa Abrams

A lot of people have a hard time meditating, but one of the things we all know how to do is sleep. Every night when we fall asleep, there's one thing we must do to be successful—we have to let go of our thoughts.

Yoga Nidra is a sleep meditation. It uses the biological process of sleep to help us naturally and effortlessly disengage from our thoughts. So, we don't have to struggle to sit up straight, no kinks develop in our knees, and there is no pain in our back. Instead, we are lying down in a comfortable position and relaxing toward sleep, where we can experience the deepest states of meditation effortlessly.

The beauty of Yoga Nidra is we can't do it wrong. The hardest thing we have to do is stay awake, but even if we fall asleep, we still get the benefits!

The ancient yogis developed Yoga Nidra to help reduce stress, heal, and restore our bodies and minds while supporting the prevention and reversal of conditions such as osteoarthritis, insomnia, brain fog, depression, anxiety, nervous system issues, and high blood pressure.

Yoga Nidra is a sleep meditation. It uses the biological process of sleep to help us naturally and effortlessly disengage from our thoughts.

Yoga Nidra is the union of awareness to the process of sleeping. It is a 30-40 minute deeply relaxing, sleep-based practice that follows the brainwaves down toward sleep, where our thoughts naturally distance themselves. The goal is to remain alert, while leaving the waking state, going past the dream state, and entering the deep sleep state. Most people fall in and out of sleep while listening to the instructions of the teacher.

Every time we practice Yoga Nidra meditation, we are giving our bodies the very best environment to experience health, peace, and vitality. We are nourishing our bodies with hormones and neurotransmitters that make us happier, more relaxed, stronger, and it all happens effortlessly by doing something that feels great!

Every time we practice Yoga Nidra meditation, we are giving our bodies the very best environment to experience health, peace, and vitality.

Yoga Nidra creates a deeply restorative state that triggers our brains to release neurotransmitters including GABA, dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins. Melatonin, a hormone, is also released. Each of these chemicals creates greater ease and well-being, stronger physical health, mental balance, and reduced inflammation. The practice has been clinically shown to increase mindfulness as well. It can serve as a stand-alone meditation practice or supplement an established meditation practice.

There is an expression, "the best way to predict the future is to invent it." This is also what Yoga Nidra does: it helps us invent our future and reduce our stress, anxiety, and depression that get in the way of what we ideally want in our lives.

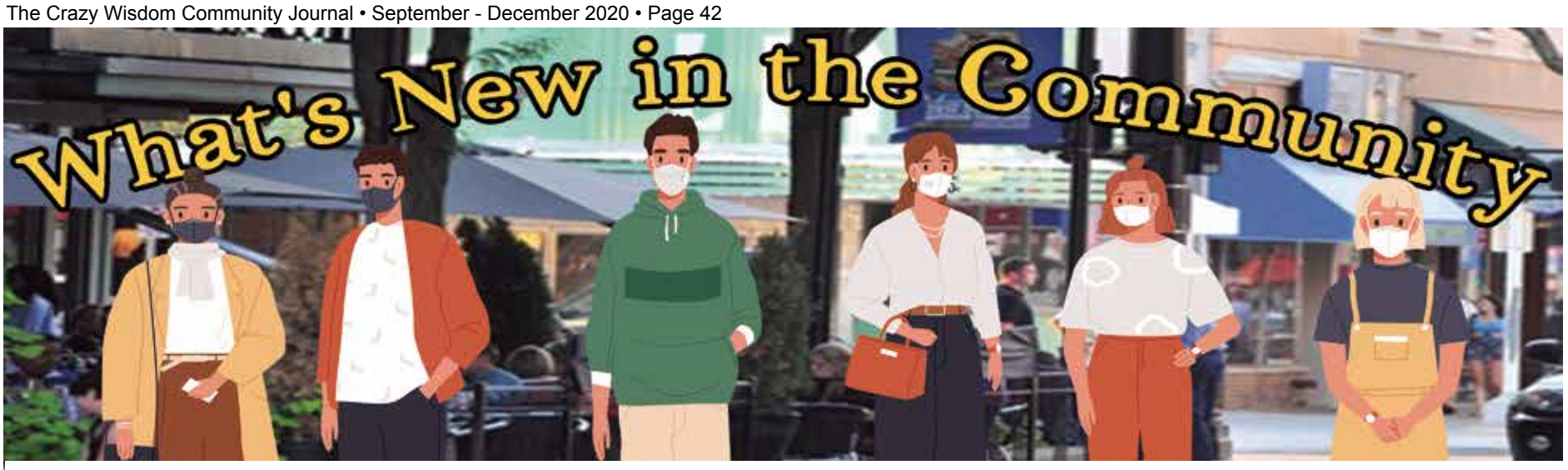
Yoga Nidra works by literally stilling the "waves" of the mind. The more we can still the waves of the mind, the more we can notice that we are more than the mind. The more our mind takes a back seat, the more we can enter the power of the mystical third eye, the point between our eyebrows. Yoga Nidra helps open this third eye—the channel where we step out of the field of dualities and into the unified vision of oneness and unconditional love.

What is the difference between Yoga Nidra and meditation? The use of setting intentions and positive affirmations is unique to Yoga Nidra. Setting an intention and repeating it during the 30-minute session allows us to target specific issues we'd like to change and improve. What seems dense and difficult to change at the physical level is pliable and easy to change at the subtler levels of being in the sleep state. Most Yoga Nidra sessions take place in a group setting, but sometimes a private session is helpful because there can be more time to work on developing intentions.

This is also what Yoga Nidra does: it helps us invent our future and reduce our stress, anxiety, and depression that get in the way of what we ideally want in our lives.

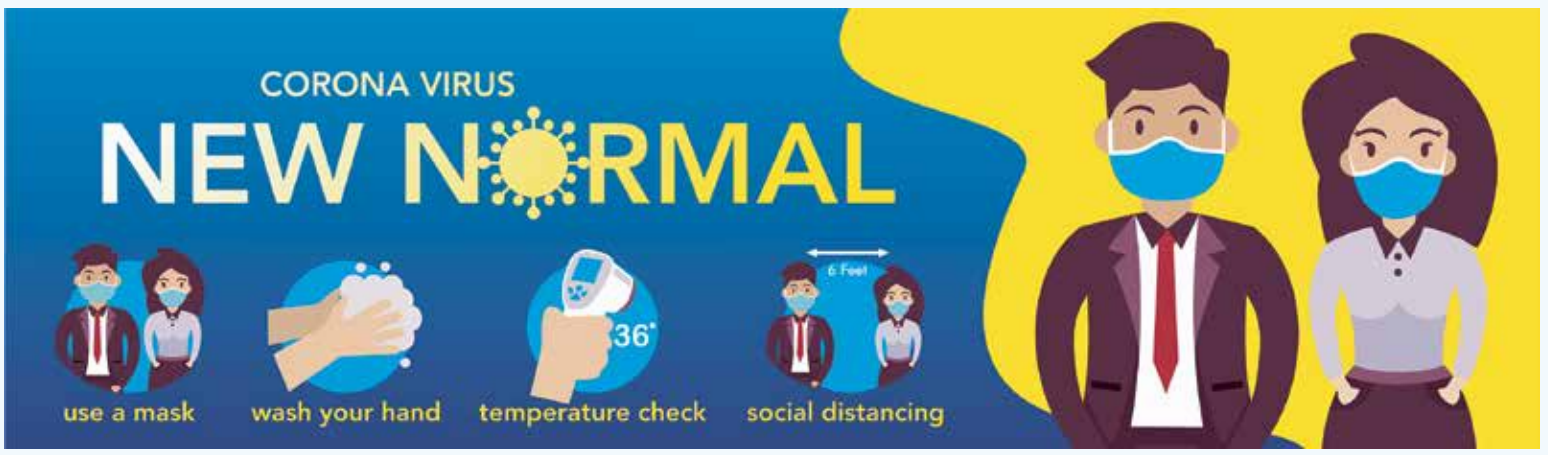
How would it feel to have everything you wanted? In Yoga Nidra, we experience this power. We enter deeper states of consciousness where our unmanifest dreams become manifest reality. We become more loving, peaceful, creative, and productive. Affirmations like "I radiate success and prosper wherever I turn" are manifested. Conditions leave us, and we experience the things in life we have wanted. If we don't know what we want, Yoga Nidra helps identify what that is. If it sounds too good to be true, try it and experience the benefits firsthand!

Lisa Abrams is a Certified Integrative Amrit Method (I AM) Yoga Nidra Facilitator. She currently offers weekly scheduled on line Zoom Yoga Nidra Healing Sessions to people all around the country. She can be reached at lawabrams@comcast.net.



By Lynda Gronlund-Naeem

This ongoing column features upcoming events within Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County and surrounding areas' Body/Mind/Spirit communities, new (during the past year or two) practitioners and holistic businesses, new books written by local/regional authors, new classes, as well as new offerings by established practitioners and holistic businesses.



While We All Adjust to the "New Normal" There Are Still Great Things Happening in the Community

Long-time alternative educator and practitioner, Merilynne Rush, has combined all her services under one new umbrella company called The Dying Year.

Read more on page 46

The SevaLight Retreat Centre for Self-Realization, Pure Meditation, Healing & Counselling, a 501C3 non-profit in Bath since 2003, has a new name and a new business model. The pandemic nearly eliminated their capacity for offering retreats.

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Association Football Club Ann Arbor (AFCAA) is a community-based pre-professional soccer club founded in 2015. The club is dedicated to spreading positivity and community through a shared love of the game of soccer, which they aim to make accessible to as many people as possible.

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Eugene Shteyngarts is a practitioner of Tong Ren Quantum Energy Healing and is seeing clients both in person and through telemedicine.

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New Offerings by Established Businesses and Practitioners

The Creature Conservancy is working to regulate alligator ownership in Michigan.

The Conservancy is a 501(c)3 nonprofit educational organization located west of Ann Arbor that holds camps, classes, private events, and programs to "inspire compassionate connections to wildlife." It was founded in 2005, when an alligator was abandoned at Animal Kingdom Veterinary Hospital next door. The gator was named "Al," and the Conservancy grew around him, taking in other animals in need, including abandoned or surrendered exotic pets and injured wildlife. Along with a sloth, a kangaroo, a warthog, cougar, reindeer, foxes, snakes, lizards, turtles, parrots, a bald eagle, and other creatures, the center now houses three alligators. Patricia Billette , manager of the Creature Conservancy, said that there are an estimated 3000 to 5000 pet alligators in Michigan, and currently there are no laws regulating their sale or purchase. Most people who buy a six to eight-inch hatchling aren't prepared for an animal that can grow up to 19 feet long and live up to 80 years. Billette said she knows of seven cases of escaped or released alligators in Michigan last summer.

The Conservancy wants to add a permit requirement for ownership of pet alligators, to include requirements such as committing to having a vet qualified to care for the animal, having a fence of a certain height to prevent escapes, and microchipping to provide accountability for abandoned or escaped pets. To this end, they are circulating a petition, reaching out to local and state representatives, and will be holding a community summit with the Humane Society and other animal organizations to share ideas and action plans.

The Conservancy, said Billette, adopts a different theme to work with each year for education and advocacy. 2019's theme was climate change; this year they are focused on "politics and laws," and the Gator project is one way they are focusing on creating change in this area. They have written a white paper on the topic which is available on their website, and they are also accepting donations to help further this cause.

For more information, the Creature Conservancy's website is thecreatureconservancy.org. They are located at 4950 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 and can be reached via email at info@thecreatureconservancy.org or by phone at (734) 929-9324.

Craniosacral Therapy practitioner and Registered Nurse, Rachael Baird, opened her new bodywork practice, Moonlit Medicine, in a small private office space in west Ann Arbor in January.

She has provided CranioSacral therapy from her home for the past six years and said that her dual background allows her to have "one foot in the door of modern medicine" and the other in holistic and energetic methods.

Baird's journey in Craniosacral began when she injured her back in the first year of nursing school. She ended up working with a physical therapist who used Craniosacral Therapy with her, and she felt completely well and aligned after one session. She decided she wanted to be able to help friends and family with their various pains, and so she sought training. Her original intent was not to offer the modality professionally, but she said she "realized [she] was good at it," and went beyond the basic training to take several courses including pediatric Craniosacral. She continues to pursue further education in this field and also volunteers her time as a teaching assistant through the Upledger Institute–the training organization founded by Craniosacral Therapy's creator.

Now, she works with patients of all ages to address all kinds of physical issues. She explained that Craniosacral Therapy "helps facilitate the body healing itself" by addressing "restrictions" or "energy cysts" and "allowing the body to relieve tension and self-correct." She said that typically clients end up realizing that pain they experience in one area of their body originates somewhere else, which reflects the energy getting stuck, and which she is able to correct.

Baird's areas of specialty include digestive issues, reproductive health, and endometriosis. She said she has found she "tunes in really well to women's needs" and intends to do more work with pregnant women. She also has plans to stock apothecary herbs, teas, candles, and other items complementary to her practice at her office in the near future.

To keep clients safe, she has implemented a mask policy, as well as temperature monitoring upon arrival, extra time between appointments to limit waiting room exposure, surface decontamination between clients, and late cancellation fee waived if you are feeling unwell.

Moonlit Medicine is located at 1817 West Stadium Boulevard Suite C, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Rachael Baird can be reached by phone at (734) 249-8139 or by email at moonlitmedicine@gmail.com. Her website is MoonlitMedicine.com.

The SevaLight Retreat Centre for Self-Realization, Pure Meditation, Healing & Counselling, a 501C3 non-profit in Bath since 2003, has a new name and a new business model.

The pandemic nearly eliminated their capacity for offering retreats. To reflect this and their prioritization of the even more life-enhancing ways that they are still of service, the Centre is being re-named: Self Realization Sevalight Centre for Pure Meditation, Healing & Counselling. In keeping with the recommendations for social distancing, they are closed for in-person visits. This includes their open meditation times, until further notice, but they welcome you to enjoy the garden and grounds. The Centre continues to offer appointments for: Pure Spiritual Healing, Intuitive Counselling & Coaching, and Pure Meditative Peace and other Stress Relieving classes, by phone or video conference, as they have done for years for those who live in other areas of the country and world. They work on a sliding scale so that your financial situation will not stop you from receiving the help or teaching that you need.

They have also added virtual programs including: Virtual Meaningful Mondays, Essential Energy Care 'Tools' for Frontline Workers, and Understanding Ourselves and the Way Forward. Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's recorded talk 'War and Peace' is also available on their website. There is no charge for virtual Mondays, you just need to email by 10 am any Monday to receive the information about how to join by video.

For more information on any of these virtual programs or to make an appointment, email info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org, call (517) 641-6201, or visit sevalight.org.

Energy Healer Danielle Groth has moved her practice, I Am Well, from Saline to a space in the Dakota Building on West Stadium in Ann Arbor.

She is sharing the space with naturopath Eleni Mitropoulos. Groth offers an array of energy healing modalities such as Reiki, EFT (tapping), Vibrational Sound Therapy, meditation and sound bowls, tuning forks, and special event workshops. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016 and decided to treat it holistically and naturally. Feeling that Reiki helped her, she decided to seek training to help others. In addition to regular Reiki training and attunement she has received training in medical Reiki—which prepares practitioners to be in a hospital setting. Johns Hopkins and other hospitals are beginning to see the value in Reiki and other energy healing methods and a practitioner might, for example, send reiki energy to the patient, doctors, and nurses during a surgical procedure. The Henry Ford Health System is now offering Reiki training to its nurses and reports lower infection rates and better surgical outcomes.

With extensive training in several healing modalities, Groth is able to combine them for even better results. For example, she explained that she might use Reiki with a client, and then help them use tapping to "settle" and reinforce the energy shifts. "EFT or tapping is used to help balance the mind-body energy system and help the brain experience a state of emotional calm and safety," she explained.

She also uses vibrational sound therapy combining both sound and vibrations from therapeutic singing bowls at varying frequencies to achieve a soothing effect on the mind, body, and spirit. She said, "These modalities and others, when used alone or together, can help people hone-in on their energetic tendencies and overcome an array of issues ranging from insomnia, headaches, trauma/PTSD, stress, relaxation disorders, anxiety, and more."

She said that sharing space with Mitropoulos is a great fit because she focuses on the spiritual and energetic side of healing, while Mitropoulos focuses on the physical. Though each runs her business independently, they can create packages for clients who would like support in both areas.

I Am Well is now located at 1785 West Stadium Boulevard, Suite 104A, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103. Danielle Groth can be reached at danielle@iamwellreiki.com or (734) 604-6938. Her website is iamwellreiki.com.

Association Football Club Ann Arbor (AFCAA) is a community-based pre-professional soccer club founded in 2015.

In 2019 the club fielded its first women's team. For the 2020 season, the men's team will be joining a new league: USL League 2, one of the premier amateur leagues in the country. The teams plan to play at Concordia University's Cardinal Stadium.

In addition to the teams, the club is involved in several projects to help the community. Mighty Oak Youth projects, the club's non-profit arm, works to increase access to soccer by providing scholarships to play for young athletes and coaching

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scholarships for women. Their Community Kicks program partners with former U.S. Women's national player Lindsey Tarpley to reach out to communities which haven't had access to soccer in the past. "Kicks & Tricks" offers mini soccer clinics at schools and clubs throughout Michigan.

The club is dedicated to spreading positivity and community through a shared love of the game of soccer, which they aim to make accessible to as many people as possible.

AFCAA is online at afcannarbor.com. They can be reached via email at info@afcannarbor.com or by phone at (734) 408-1627.

Inspire Behavioral Health located on Plymouth Road in north Ann Arbor has expanded its office space by 200% as of April.

Inspire is a cooperative of psychotherapists which opened in July of 2017. Since then, especially since the summer of 2019, it has experienced significant growth and now will be able to offer more services. Therapist Bill Nurmi said that expanded space will offer eight private therapy rooms and two larger spaces that may be used for groups, and potentially meditation and/or recovery-oriented yoga classes. What started with one full time therapist and three part-timers has grown to three full time and three part time practitioners, with talks for a couple more to join. One practitioner will be offering EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), a method for helping people to process trauma. Each therapist runs her/his own practice and people interested can check the website to see each person's background and areas of specialty.

Inspire Behavioral Health is located at 3001 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Their website is Inspireannarbor.com. Bill Nurmi can be reached by phone at (734) 238-3771 or by email at bnurmi.inspire@gmail.com.

PKSA Karate Ann Arbor North–the Superior Township-based location of the Professional Karate Schools of America–opened on March 3.

Owners Ken and Whitney Lewis, both black belts (3rd and 2nd degree respectively) and certified instructors in the Korean martial art of Tang Soo Do, have taught part-time out of a day care center they rented twice per week for several years, under the umbrella of PKSA Karate Ann Arbor, which is located in southwest Ann Arbor and has been part of the community for over ten years. Students living on the north side of Ann Arbor had a hard time traveling to the school through downtown rush hour traffic for evening classes, so the Lewis's agreed to start a "satellite school" to serve those families. They have been working toward their own full-time brick and mortar location for some time, but had difficulty finding a suitable, affordable space with a landlord willing to work with a new business. They were finally able to sign a lease in January of this year. The space had previously been a medical lab and had been empty for some time, so there was some daunting work needed before the school could open: demolition of existing walls to make room for a large class area as well as plumbing and electrical work. With enthusiastic help from the community of student families they have built, they were able to clear the space, make repairs, paint, put down karate mats, and create an open and inviting martial arts school.

PKSA is a family and community-oriented organization. They provide classes for kids and adults, with some families training for their black belts and beyond together. The youngest children, in the Little Ninjas classes, are ages three to six years old and learn a curriculum of skills including coordination, self-control, following directions, physical fitness, and of course a lot of kid-centered fun. Whitney Lewis holds a degree in Early Childhood Education and works as a preschool teacher during the day. Little Ninjas is one of her favorite age groups to work with. She is also starting a new Tiny Tigers class for ages 2 and 3 with their parents' participation.

Ken Lewis works at Pioneer High School as the auto shop teacher. He grew up in the martial arts, while Whitney started her martial arts journey as a young adult. Both Lewis's are members of their national organization's world tournament competition team, with plans to compete in the fall of 2021 in the International Tang Soo Do federation UK's World Tournament, host country to be announced.

PKSA schools are open enrollment, so new students can join at any time. During social distancing for Covid-19, classes are being streamed online, so new and existing students can train in their own homes.

PKSA Karate Ann Arbor North is located at 5692 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. They can be reached by phone at (734) 780-7176 or by email at pksaannarbornorth@gmail.com. More information including class schedule is online at pksa.com/annarbornorth.

Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal & Natural Medicine (AASM) has moved to 3684 West Liberty within the Liberty Office Center.

They welcome new and existing patrons for the student intern massage & bodywork clinic with a welcome rate of $30.00 per one-hour session. AASM has also opened a free herbal medicine clinic, which is currently operating on Wednesdays from 10-1 and alternate Thursdays from 10-3. There is no charge for consultations and herbs from the apothecary are priced to sell. The clinic is in association with the AASM's One Year Clinical Herbalist Certification program, utilizing the interns under supervision, and providing basic assessments and recommendations for rejuvenation and healing of body systems.

For more information about the Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal & Natural medicine visit them online at naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net, call 734-769-7794, or email nshaaassociates@gmail.com.

New Books by Area Authors

Berkley-based author Angie Kidd, writing as "A. Kidd," published her book *The Healing Star* in the summer of 2019.

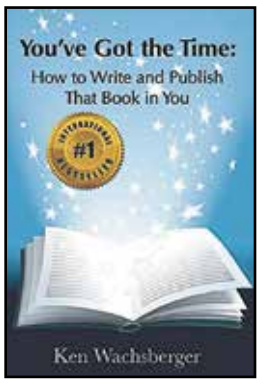
It is independently published. Described as a "middle grade light fantasy," (for grades three to six) it tells the story of 4th grader Julia and her grandmother who she calls Grammu. Julia must catch a falling star to heal Grammu from "the disappearing disease," which is slowly turning her invisible.

Kidd has been writing stories, she said, since before she could actually write. She would tell stories to her mother, who wrote them down and let her paint pictures to go with them. She followed this passion into adulthood and studied Written Communication at Eastern Michigan University and then received her master's degree in Library and Information Science with a specialization in Children's Librarianship from Wayne State University in Detroit.

The Healing Star, Kidd explained, has themes of "loss and hope," and shows how "an entire community can have faith during difficult times." She chose to use the pen name "A. Kidd" as a pun on "a kid," hoping that children seeing a book written by a kid might inspire them to write their own stories. Kidd is her maiden name.

Kidd also writes and has published poetry, and she recently finished a new book for a slightly older demographic; an "environmental dystopian adventure light sci-fi fantasy," which she will publish soon.

The Healing Star *is available at the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. More information about Angie Kidd and her book is at her Facebook page: Facebook.com/A.Kiddwrites. She can be reached via email at a.kiddwrites@gmail.com.*



Local award-winning author and book coach Ken Wachsberger published his new book: You've got the Time: *How to Write and Publish That Book in You* at the end of February.

He has been teaching writing in some form or another since 1987, when he began teaching at Eastern Michigan University. His own writing journey began in the Vietnam era, when he participated in the underground press. Currently, Wachsberger works as a book coach and editor. Many of his clients are professionals who write books to add to their credibility and as a product to sell. Others use writing as a way to process trauma or tell an important story from their lives. Some just have a unique, interesting, or funny story to tell.

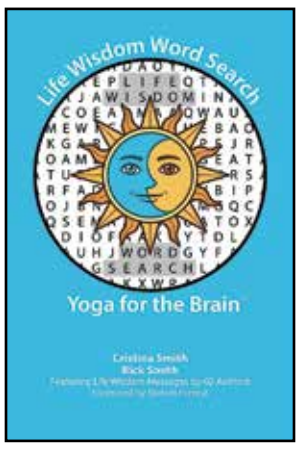
For anyone who has contemplated writing a book, Wachsberger's book can help them organize their thoughts, carve out the time, create a structure for their book, write well even when one is not an experienced author, self-publish or negotiate a contract with a publisher, and create a stream of income from their book sales. It even covers specifics like designing a cover, obtaining an ISBN, copyright, and how to create an audiobook.

Wachsberger has published books on a number of subjects, mainly through his company Azenphony Press which he founded in 1987 to self-publish his first novel, though he has worked with other publishers, as well. He is experienced with negotiating contracts with publishers for himself and his clients, but he said that self-publishing is often a better deal for the author, who often ends up doing most of his/her own marketing even when publishing with a big-name publisher.

At least two book events are planned for the fall. As with many events, scheduling has been thrown off with the uncertainty around Covid-19 social distancing efforts, so keep an eye on Wachsberger's website or contact him for dates and times as they are solidified.

You've got the Time: How to Write and Publish That Book in You can be purchased at the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, at one of Wachsberger's events, or through Azenphony Press' website.

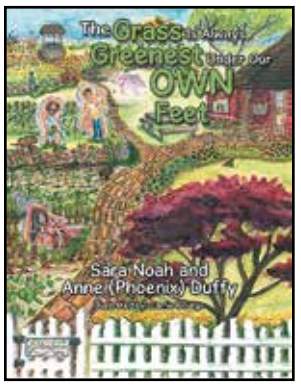
Ken Wachsberger can be reached at ken@azenphonypress.com or (734) 635-0577. More information is online at kenthebookcoach.com and azenphonypress.com.



Ann Arbor based spiritual healer and author Eve Wilson has co-authored a book as part of Christina Smith's award-winning series *Yoga for the Brain.*

The books are puzzle books that combine positive spiritual messages with brain building activities like sudoku and word searches. The latest book, *Inspired Wisdom Word Search*, was released in February and contains paragraphs by 60 different spiritual and self-help authors paired with word search puzzles revealing "secret messages"– inspirational statements found once the puzzles are completed. The series has won a dozen literary awards in the US and UK. Wilson described them as "fun-filled, brain boosting spiritually aware puzzle books." Topics are wide ranging and include an immigrant's story, a child's letter to Santa, and Wilson's contribution, titled *Living From Your Inner Wisdom*, which she said is aimed at "inspiring people to live their truths."

More information about the book can be found at cristinasmith.com/yoga-for-the-brain-books-2. Eve Wilson's website is spiritualhealers.com and she can be reached at evw@spiritualhealers.com or (734) 780-7635.



Anne Duffy and Sarah Noah, along with illustrator Carrie Bourgo, published *The Grass is Always Greenest Under Our Own Feet in* March through Balboa Press.

Duffy and Noah are both originally from Michigan and visit their families here often; Duffy lives in California where the two met at a spiritual center, and Noah now lives in Colorado. Noah described the book as a "metaphysical adventure storybook" aimed at "lightworkers" and adults and older teens. It's an illustrated allegorical tale of "enlightened teenage superheroes" who work to help save a town from its own beliefs of lack and limitation. Social justice issues like racism, sexism, environmental justice and animal rights are touched on. The book "highlights the power of our words and phrases in shifting our frequency," said Duffy. A phrase like "there's more than one way to skin a cat"– violent and abusive toward animals—becomes "there's more than one way to frost a cake." "Kill two birds with one stone" becomes "feed two birds with one scone." Duffy and Noah would often look for ways to change existing language to "higher frequency" ways of communicating which got the point across in a more positive way. They said it took a while to find the right illustrator for their story, which was originally planned as a movie (and which they do intend to eventually pursue). Bourgo was a friend of an Ann Arbor connection and her art, which she described as "vivid, whimsical, and symbolic watercolor paintings," was just what Duffy and Noah had been looking for.

Duffy and Noah had planned to do a book signing at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore in the spring, but that was postponed due to Covid-19. They will announce on their Facebook and Instagram pages when the signing is rescheduled.

The Grass is Always Greenest Under Our Own Feet *will be available at the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore or directly through Balboa Press. The book's Facebook fan page is facebook.com/TheGrassisAlwaysGreenest and the Instagram page is instagram.com/thegrassisalwaysgreenest. Anne Duffy can be reached at manifest5x1@gmail.com.*

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Congratulations and thank you for 25 years of supporting our community from your friends at 7 Notes Natural Health!

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Jan. 9, 2020, 7:30 - 9:30,
6 classes meet every 4 Thursdays.
Riding the Wave of Change: Hope, Healing and Spiritual Growth for Our World
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New Classes

Yoga instructor and Reiki Master Elisabeth Sötebeer moved to Ann Arbor in August of 2019 after living in California for 30 years.

Japa meditation is a form of meditation that uses mala or prayer beads, in which a word or short two to three-word mantra is repeated with each bead on a string of 108 beads. Sötebeer explained that this method comes from an ancient form of prayer and is related to the rosary. She said it is a very simple form of meditation and can impart deep peace and relaxation.

Sötebeer is a teacher with the School of Royal Yoga, an international organization which teaches classic Hatha Yoga. It is headquartered in Toronto with major schools in New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Georgia. She has special training in yoga for children, mother/baby yoga, and chair yoga, and she has been offering yoga for seniors for over ten years. She teaches yoga and meditation virtually for individuals and offers yoga classes in two local retirement homes. She can provide yoga classes in group and corporate settings and is also able to offer yoga teacher training. She recently completed training in "Rest, Relax & Restore" yoga and is planning to bring this new offering to her clients.

She will also offer a Reiki Level 1 practitioner course as soon as it is feasible. Contact her for dates and information.

Elisabeth Sötebeer can be reached by phone at (949) 433-916 or by email at Elisabeth.sotebeer@gmail.com. More information about the School of Royal Yoga can be found at TheSchoolofRoyalYoga.com.

New Practitioners and Businesses

Dr. Simon Xue, a Chinese Medicine practitioner and acupuncturist, moved from California to Ann Arbor at the end of 2018 and has opened his clinic, Pacific Acupuncture Center, in the first quarter of 2019.

His mother is also a doctor of Chinese Medicine, still living in China, and she is the third generation of their family to practice the profession, making Dr. Xue the fourth. He is a certified Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China, a Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in the US, a licensed Acupuncturist in California and Illinois, and a registered Acupuncturist in Michigan. He has over 20 years of patient care experience in Acupuncture, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Herbal Medicine spanning China, the UK, and the US. His specialties include treating arthritis, tinnitus, thyroiditis, depression, infertility, and pain, with meridian, scalp, and ear acupuncture, acupressure, cupping, herbal medicine, and moxibustion (a form of heat therapy in which dried plant materials are burned near the surface of the skin). He also practices and teaches Taichi and Qigong as additional tools for healing.

Dr. Xue continues to study traditional as well as modern natural medicine, in order to blend ancient knowledge with modern medical research and techniques to effectively treat patients and assist them in achieving their health goals. He is dedicated to helping people "overcome medical, mental, and spiritual obstacles as well as build, maintain, and expand healthy and productive lifestyle choices and habits." He tailors a specific treatment plan for each of his patients, explaining each step necessary to achieve the desired effect, with a strong element of preventative medicine in addition to treating existing problems.

Xue said that people usually feel better after their first treatment, and that anyone can benefit from acupuncture. He said that Michigan is very different from California in that California insurance plans tend to cover acupuncture and people are very familiar with it. He hopes this will become the case over time in Michigan as more people and institutions become aware of the proven benefits of acupuncture and related therapies.

Pacific Acupuncture Center is located at 4470 Jackson Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. The clinic can be reached by phone at (734) 800-4118 or by email at pacificacupuncturecenter@gmail.com.

After practicing in Warren for 25 years, Robert Krasnick set up his own solo practice, Krasnick Regenerative Medicine in the beginning of May.

With a focus on regenerative medicine, Dr. Krasnick is seeing patients both in office and through telemedicine. Dr. Krasnick provides alternative treatments for pain, avoiding traditional anti-inflammatory drugs or steroids. He treats chronic pain and injuries using prolotherapy (injecting dextrose into areas of injury to increase blood flow and healing), stem cell injections, platelet rich plasma injections (platelets contain growth factors for healing), and ozone injections—all therapies that make use of the body's natural ability to heal.

After 25 years of practicing in a group practice, Dr. Krasnick wanted to go solo in order to focus on alternative injury therapy. He chose Ann Arbor because he thinks it is the best place to practice, not to mention that he graduated from U-M medical school and has had two children graduate from U-M, and one child entering this fall.

Robert Krasnick can be reached by phone at (734) 585-5653. His office is located at 210 Little Lake Road, Suite 8. You can learn more about the practice on his website at www.krasnickregen.com.

Long-time alternative educator and practitioner, Merilynne Rush, has combined all her services under one new umbrella company called The Dying Year.

She offers advance care planning with a special focus on covid, information and planning for home funerals and green burial, end-of-life doula training and mentoring, and of course, she is continuing the Death Café.

She said, "A lot of folks are becoming increasingly aware of the need to do their Advance Directives in the current climate. I help them get the conversation going with new tools that are Covid-19 specific, including charts and stats that address the likelihood of becoming very sick, based on age, health status, and other factors. I teach people to take these tools to their healthcare provider and be prepared to have hard, realistic conversations."

In response to the Covid crisis, the Death Café is now being held now through Zoom. To participate, you need to email her for the link, or you can follow The Dying Year on Facebook to receive announcements and send Rush a message for the link. Death Café is always the third Saturday of month from 10:30 to noon. Rush said, "Conversations have turned out to be really deep and beautiful—it's not better than meeting in person, just different. It's turned out to be a really great way to meet and converse."

Rush is now offering consultations about home funerals and green burial online, as well as moving her doula trainings entirely online—so it's open to everyone all over the country and the world! She has several times available during the day to accommodate different students in different time zones.

There is also an end-of-life doula discussion group—open to everyone who is thinking about becoming an end-of-life doula, not just people already in training. This discussion happens Wednesday at noon. Rush has really embraced the online possibilities and in response, her business has blossomed. She looks forward to building an even stronger online community.

To learn more, you can visit The Dying year on their website, www.thedyingyear.org. For zoom links to the meeting rooms, message them through Facebook @ thedyingyear or contact Rush by email at thedyingyear@gmail.com.

Continued on page 49

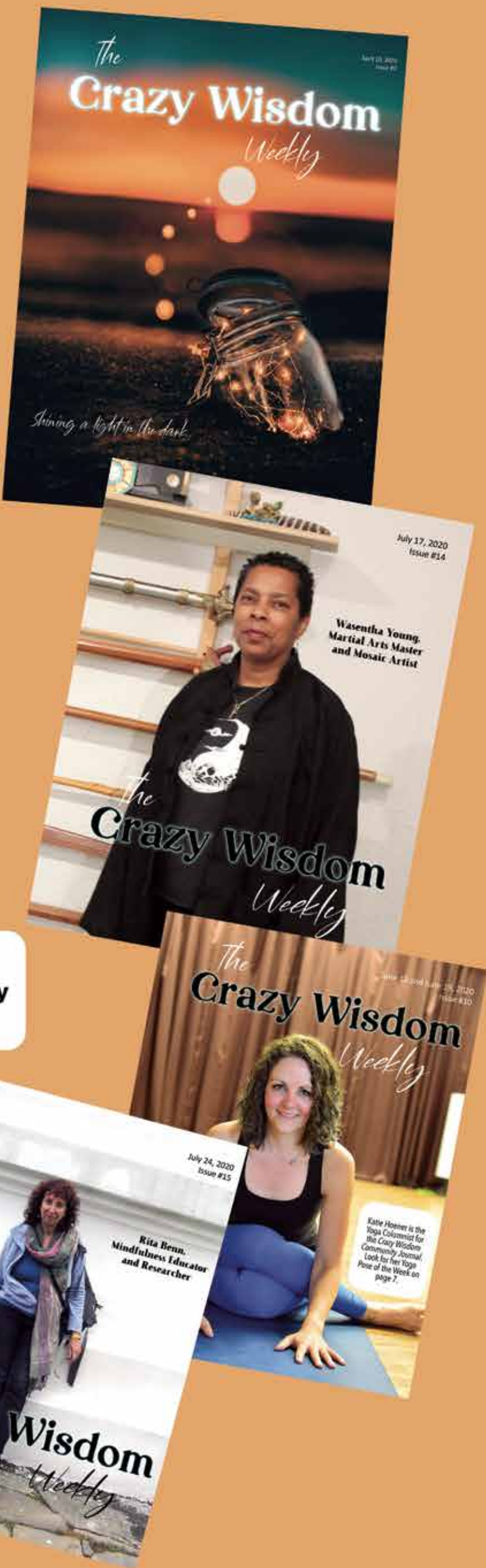
A LITTLE CRAZY WISDOM DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO YOUR INBOX EVERY WEEK!

Because of Covid-19, we created *The Crazy Wisdom Weekly*— a short and lively e-zine, for our local and regional readership. Our community liked the quick read so much, that we are going to continue to publish it along with our seasonal printed issue.

It's full of breezy interviews with local artists, authors, and practitioners, as well as meaningful features on topical issues and a calendar of local events.

We welcome all submissions!
Email yours to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

To sign up for the e-zine visit crazywisdomjournal.com/crazy-wisdom-weekly and click on "Sign Up Now."



Mindfulness with Paulette

During these challenging and uncertain times
Learn how mindfulness and self-compassion
Can help us
Cope with stress and anxiety,
Manage our difficult emotions, and
Take better care of ourselves in daily life.

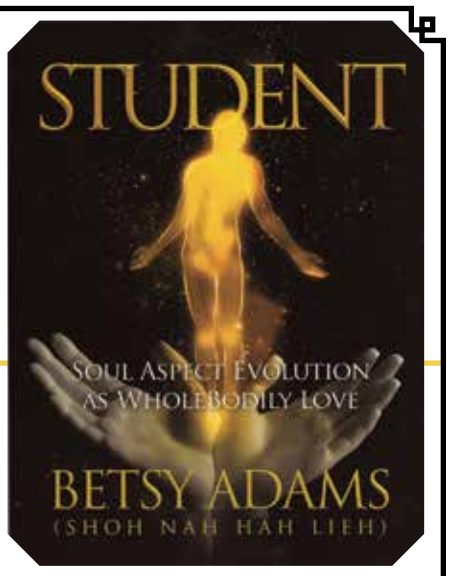
6 Tuesdays, Sept 10 through Oct 15, 2020
10:30 AM-12:00 PM EDT ONLINE
Free Introductory Session Sept 3, 10:30-11:30 AM EDT
(Please register for this session if you are not already registered for the course.)
This new course from the Center for MSC is offered via Zoom
Includes recorded meditations and handouts.
Compassionate COVID-19 Discount $150
Was $240; Still $120 for repeat participants.
6 CEs available separately.
Paulette Grotrian, Certified MSC Teacher and MBSR Teacher
Co-Founder Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness

Please register with Paulette.
www.mindfulnesswithpaulette.weebly.com

Paulette Grotrian, Certified MSC & MBSR Teacher, experienced meditator and teacher. Trained with Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues, UMass, and Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer, UCSD. Founding member, Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness.

Contact her at mindfulnesswithpaulette@gmail.com or 734-276-7707
www.mindfulnesswithpaulette.weebly.com

Evolution of WholeBodily Love via soul aspect evolution is at the heart of this new work. How this is done, in this realm, in our Universe is explored: the ego Universe, the Fields of Light, the Sacred Body Factories, the manifestations inhabited by the soul aspect(s) and how they appear here, and how they are related to here, are all explored.



Newly Published

Student: Soul Aspect Evolution

As WholeBodily Love

Now Available at Crazy Wisdom!

Betsy Adams (Shoh Nah Hah Lieh) has, since infancy, lived deeply and feelingly "IN" nature, the expressions of nature that arise here in our present home, Planet Earth. She has worked with nature, animals, and humans in her consulting practice of over 40 years and has degrees in Evolutionary Ecology and Creative Writing.

Photo by Nandi Davis

For more information about Betsy, or her books, visit her website at:
spiritualevolutionoftheanimalkingdom.com

or email Betsy at:
shohnahhahlieh@gmail.com

YOU ARE LOVED. ALWAYS, FOREVER,
AND INFINITELY LOVED

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

Crazy Wisdom Tea Room
hosted by Joe Kelty, Ed Morin, and David Jibson

Second and Fourth Wednesday of each month, 7-9 p.m.

Until further notice, all sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom.

Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for Zoom link

Second Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Poetry Workshop. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction. Sign-up for new participants begins 6:45 p.m.

Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes. Open Mic reading for up to 1 hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry.

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series Featured readers

September 23 - Dunya Mikhail is an Iraqi-American whose five books of poems address themes of war, exile, and loss. She has received Guggenheim and Kresge fellowships, the Arab American Book Award, and the U.N. Human Rights Award. She currently teaches Arabic language and literature at Oakland University. Her reading will be bilingual.

October 28 - Donovan Hohn is the author of *Moby-Duck: The True Story of 28,800 Bath Toys Lost at Sea,* a New York Times Notable Book and runner-up for two major awards. His essays appear in *Harper's*, *Lapham's Quarterly*, and *Best Creative Nonfiction*. He will read from *The Inner Coast: Essays,* published last June.

October 28 - Natalie Bakopoulos is the author of two novels: *The Green Shore* and the recently published *Scorpionfish*. Her work has appeared in *Granta*, *The Iowa Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *O. Henry Prize Stories*. She's an assistant professor at Wayne State University and faculty member of the summer program, Writing Workshops in Greece.

December 2 - Bonnie Jo Campbell is the author of the bestselling novel, *Once Upon a River*, and the story collection *American Salvage*—a finalist for the National Book Award. Her most recent story collection is entitled *Mothers, Tell Your Daughters*. She has received a Pushcart Prize and a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle

The Poetry Series is open to all.
There is never a charge.

Crazy Wisdom Bookstore
114 S. Main St., Ann Arbor
734.665.2757 www.crazywisdom.net
https://cwcircle.poetry.blog/

Continued from page 46

Eugene Shteyngarts is a practitioner of Tong Ren Quantum Energy Healing and is seeing clients both in person and through telemedicine.

He works from a studio in his home in Maybee, Michigan, but also does distance healing with clients over the phone and through the WhatsApp. Tong Ren is a form of energy healing developed by Tom Tam at the Oriental Culture Institute in Boston. Shteyngarts explained, "It is based on the premise that illness is related to interruptions, or blockages, in the body's natural flow of blood, neural bioelectricity, blood, hormones, and chi (life force energy). Most blockages can be manually identified along the spine where they inhibit the activity of the central nervous system."

Shteyngarts' mother is a Reiki Master who started teaching him about energy healing at 11 years old. He would practice by helping his father with his headaches. He had severe scoliosis which caused back pain and impacted his daily life. A friend of his, who lives in Boston, told him about *his* mother, who broke her back at 86-years old and wasn't expected to live long or be able to move freely again. Tom Tam was able to heal her, baffling her doctors. Shteygarts decided to contact the Oriental Culture Institute to see if they could help his back pain, and they said yes. He traveled there to work with the Institute and said he grew an inch and his back straightened, he no longer has lower back or sciatic pain, and his "mental state is much better." He decided to dive into training with Tong Ren so he could help others. He said, "We have seen incredible results with cancer (including late stages), chronic pain, emotional issues, mental health disorders, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, neuropathy, weight loss issues, and digestive problems, autoimmune disorders, infertility, and many more." In explaining why distance healing works, he said "we're all connected through connective unconsciousness." He also said that the energy work goes both ways–that the practitioner and the patient are both being healed during the process. In addition to and in concert with Tong Ren he is versed in Tui-Na acupressure massage and Qi-Gong distance healing.

Eugene Shteyngarts can be reached by phone at (734) 834-5113 or by email at hdocgene@gmail.com. His Facebook page is Facebook.com/gene.shteyngarts.

Robin Bow, Jess Kilbourn, and Toula Saratsis have formed a collective of End of Life Doulas serving Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, and surrounding areas.

They offer "non-medical, non-judgmental, holistic support, comfort, and services to the dying and their families," said Kilbourn. The three met during their End of Life Doula training through Lifespan Doulas, under Merilynne Rush and Patty Brennan, in late 2016. They realized their personalities, backgrounds, skills, and goals in helping people complemented each other's and that they worked well together. With "more hands, more time, more skillsets," Kilbourn said, it made sense to form the collective so that they could provide more value.

The collective works with dying people and their loved ones from as early as an initial terminal diagnosis through bereavement, offering education and support to empower the dying and their families.

Bow is a registered nurse with 26 years of patient care experience. She has worked as a hospice case manager for 12 years and owned and operated a non-medical home care business. She is a Reiki practitioner and, like Kilbourn and Saratsis, is a certified end-of-life doula.

Kilbourn has been a massage therapist and bodyworker for 24 years and has taught women's and gender studies at Eastern Michigan University for over 21 years. She became interested in home funeral and green burial and started attending workshops with local expert and activist Merilynne Rush approximately ten years ago, which led her ultimately to complete end-of-life doula certification with Rush. She also holds a proficiency badge with the National End-of life Doula Alliance (NEDA), is a member of the National Home Funeral Alliance (NHFA), and has trained for the last year with Amy Wright Glenn at the Institute for the Study of Birth, Breath, and Death. She is trained in Final Touch Technique™ and volunteers as a hospice massage therapist. She said that she "finds holding space and offering comforting touch to the dying and supporting their families and beloveds to be a sacred honor."

Saratsis holds a NEDA proficiency badge, is a Home Funeral Guide, a member of NHFA, and a member of the Children's Palliative Care Coalition of Michigan. She is also a parent advisor volunteer at a local children's hospital. She was inspired to this work by her daughter, who had a life limiting condition and passed away. She said she "is committed to supporting and guiding clients to maintain hope and dignity during the dying process and achieve a meaningful final rite of passage."

The collective is available for individual and family consultations, comfort touch/ massage /Reiki, companion care, respite for caregivers, care coordination, end-of-life and after-death decision making guidance and support, community education, and more.

Jess Kilbourn is the collective's contact person. She can be reached at jkilbourn@emich.edu or (734) 417-4522. More information is available at jessicakilbourn.com.

Eleni Mitropoulos, ND, is a "holistic culture mentor," meaning that she assists people in living a more holistic lifestyle and achieving their health goals naturally by not only guiding them in what steps to take, but providing accountability and co-creating an individual plan for each of her clients to care for themselves in ways that make the most sense for their lives.

She provides holistic wellness consultation, customized herbal formulas, nourishment plans and accountability, aura photography, sugar reduction strategy, in addition to selling her homemade illuminating face oil, CBD cream, and body butter. Her knowledge in naturopathy and herbal support pairs with her natural predilection for organization and self-discipline honed by her years in military school. She explained that many people have dabbled in this or that as far as nutrition, herbs, and naturopathy, but end up lacking direction and follow-through, or get overwhelmed. This is where she can help people decide on and create lasting change in their lives.

She shares her newly opened space in the Dakota Building with energy healer Danielle Groth. Both practitioners own and operate their own practices but can collaborate and create packages for clients who want support both in the physical realm (with Mitropoulos) and in the energetic/spiritual realm (with Groth).

Eleni Mitropoulos's practice, Luminary, is located at 1785 West Stadium Suite 104A Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Her website is luminaryculture.com. She can be reached by phone at 734.535.8883 or by email at eleni@luminaryculture.com. You can also purchase her homemade facial products in her Etsy shop HebeHerbalceuticals.

Submit your listing for the January through April 2021 issue

Please note that the "What's New in the Community" column is part of the editorial (not paid-for-advertising) part of the CW Journal, and the editors may or may not include what you submit. Whether the editors include material or not will depend on space considerations, as well as other editorial issues, such as the need for high resolution jpgs and the overall mix of stories included in the "What's New in the Community" column in a given issue. If you would like to submit information to be considered for this column, please email communitynews@crazywisdom.net, or drop off or mail information to the store: What's New in the Community, 114 South Main, Ann Arbor, MI, 48104. The firm deadline for submissions for the next issue (January through April 2021) is November 2, 2020.

LEAPS OF FAITH

TALES OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

Photos and article by Cashmere Morley

This column is a look at a brave soul who took a leap of faith to open her own business . What follows is a personal profile of a business owner following her dreams and thriving despite the odds—and Covid.

Kokopelli's Corner

Cathy Boaz - Owner
111 East Grand River Avenue
Howell, MI 48843
Open 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday
Monday, 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
facebook.com/KokopellisKornerHowell

Due to Covid restrictions, we encourage you to call for any changes in operating hours before visiting.

Find Hope and Healing at Kokopelli's Korner

An earthy, woody scent of incense pulled me past the bake shops, the coffee boutiques, and the tattoo parlors that lined the streets of downtown Howell, and into a curious, little bright yellow and orange shop with an even more curious figure playing the flute and dancing on the awning. It was a place of spirituality, of acceptance, of hope. I had stepped into Kokopelli's Korner.

"The whole reason I opened Kokopelli's was to help people get in touch with their spiritual side," said owner Cathy Boaz, who opened Kokopelli's five years ago this past October. Walking into the shop, whether you believe in the store's otherworldly worldviews or not, is like feeling the weight of a bad day lift from your shoulders. There is a wide variety of candles, jewelry, stones, smudge sticks, and other soul-healing items to be discovered. My spirits were lifted by simply taking some time to sit in the space and enjoy the hustle and bustle of the busy downtown streets from the charming storefront.

It was a place of spirituality, of acceptance, of hope.

Boaz herself is adorned with crystals of every shape and size during our interview, a sample of the healing gifts that can be found around the store. Rings glittered on her fingers as she gestured to the many restorative items on display; various crystal necklaces caught the light and helped explain what makes this place special to not only her, but the community. Crystals, Boaz believes, can be more powerful than medicine when used correctly. The shop is an extension of Boaz—she practices what she preaches.

"There are many people who have turned away from churches and from God, and I wanted to give them an alternative route; to not give up completely [during life's hardships] and to look at the creator in a different way. I wanted them to connect to the world again, to have hope. I wanted to help them see through the pain and suffering in the world, to assist them in finding a more beautiful way to express themselves, instead of looking at the world as something dark," Boaz said.

The shop, said Boaz, is a place people come to when they need to find a sense of calm, a place to relax, or to heal from the hardships of the day. People from all walks of life enter the shop, and Boaz is ready for every one of them. She said she finds solace in guiding the wayward and the lost who venture into her location.

"I like making people feel better about themselves," she said. "I do get a lot of people who are down and sad [when they] come to see me, and I like lifting their spirits up and reminding them what they came into this world for, or at least [to] get them on the journey to figuring it out for themselves. My favorite part is just being there for people and watching them grow [through becoming aware of their own spirituality]. I've seen people come in here in the lowest of lows and have watched them blossom into the most amazing healers."

Walking into the shop, whether you believe in the store's otherworldly worldviews or not, is like feeling the weight of a bad day lift from your shoulders.

Boaz was initially met with resistance when she opened the shop back in 2014.

"You'd be surprised at the initial reaction [I received]," said Boaz. "I kept being led to Howell, and everyone told me not to come here. 'It's too religious out this way,' they told me. I told them that doesn't matter—I do believe in God, and I do believe in Christ. I try to teach people that even though you've given up on churches and organized religion doesn't mean you have to give up on the Creator. It's all about love, and that's what you'll find here." With that mindset instilled, fitting into the budding small-business fabric of downtown Howell has been a breeze, Boaz said.

People from all walks of life enter the shop, and Boaz is ready for every one of them... she finds solace in guiding the wayward and the lost who venture into her location.

Owner Cathy Boaz

When asked if something spoke to her about the topic of spirituality specifically, when it came to opening a shop, she said yes, literally.

"Since I was a little girl, I could see spirits and would have crazy experiences that I couldn't understand. I wasn't raised to understand them," said Boaz. "As I got older, I started to learn more about my Native American heritage, and then in my 20s I had a spirit come to me and tell me that I was going to own a spiritual shop at the age I am now. They told me it was going to be called Kokopelli's Korner—and I've had that name ever since."

> "Five years ago, I literally had a hand on my back and it gave me a shove as if to say, 'It's time.'"
> – Cathy Boaz

Kokopelli is a fertility God of the Hopi tribe. A hunchbacked figure who plays the flute to chase away winter and bring back spring. Kokopelli generally presides over childbirth and agriculture, though he has been known to help a local business or two, according to Boaz, who asked the deity to "impregnate" her store with good fortune. Business, she said, has been steady ever since.

Before owning a spirituality shop, Boaz had her own photography studio for 22 years, a job that brought her joy, but ultimately was not where her passions lay. After her experience with the spirit, she explained that she was going about her job at the photography studio just like any other day when another spirit came to her to let her know the time to open her shop was *now.*

"Five years ago, I literally had a hand on my back and it gave me a shove as if to say, 'It's time.'" Boaz said.

"Not knowing where the money was going to come from at first was the hardest thing," Boaz said. "I had to have faith, and luckily it all fell into place. I got to a point where I stopped worrying and just fell into trust in the Great Spirit, who is guiding me to wherever I'm supposed to go."

There is a little bit of everything in the shop for people who may not be interested in the aspect of spirituality, too. Rows of essential oil bottles and bagged teas are a welcome sight for such patrons, but Boaz assured me that everyone who comes through the door, believer and non-believer alike, can find something positive.

"I love my days ahead of me," she said, "I never know who's going to walk through the door. I never know what experience I'm going to have, but I know it'll be surreal, getting to work this closely with the Creator. When you have that with you and around you all the time, what's not to love? I'm supposed to do this, I came here to do this, and if you follow the passion in life, you'll make the money after that."

Whether you're searching for a little spiritual guidance, or just find your way to Kokopelli's while wandering the quaint streets of Howell, go in, take a look, there's something for everyone here.

"This is my heart and soul, when you come in here, you get a little piece of me. Literally—there are blood, sweat, and tears in this place. If I couldn't do this anymore, I wouldn't want to live anymore, because this is what I came here to do. For anyone that comes in here, I hope they feel the love that went into this place and are able to find the divine in Kokopelli's Korner."

Great Tastes in Local Food

By Crysta Coburn
Photography by Rachel Everheart

These locally-owned businesses are doing their best to accomodate pandemic restrictions and keep both customers and employees safe. While these reviews were written pre-pandemic, we've provided updated hours and services, but due to frequent restriction changes, please give them a call before visiting.

Carrigan Cafe

I am always on the lookout for casual, comfortable places to grab a latte or a cup of tea and hang out alone or with friends. A place I can enjoy a book while I sip, or get a little work done. Carrigan Cafe in downtown Saline more than fits the bill.

I love the exposed brick and hardwood floors, and this was the first time I had seen a decorative dropped ceiling. Art and whimsy is spread throughout the cafe. There are teddy bears of all sizes. At the table next to mine were two large teddy bears seated as if in pleasant conversation. I also spied knick knacks from one of my favorite BBC TV shows, Doctor Who, and a large blue OM symbol made of punched out pieces of aluminum cans. When I commented on the cute eclectic mugs, the barista asked if I wanted a cute mug. Of course, I said yes, and I ended up with a mug shaped like a little orange fox.

My fellow patrons were equally relaxed, some in quiet conversation while others sat with their laptops or homework spread out before them.

On this day, I was catching a cozy brunch with my husband. My fellow patrons were equally relaxed, some in quiet conversation while others sat with their laptops or homework spread out before them.

While my husband ordered his usual black coffee, I chose a non-dairy chai latte made with coconut milk. (Almond and soy milk options are also available.) The beverage menu is sizable with nearly a dozen specialty espressos in addition to the usual espresso and coffee options and a few choices of teas/tisanes, hot cocoa, sodas, shakes, smoothies, and more.

Sweet treats include Guernsey ice cream and pastries—and yes, there are gluten free options. I couldn't help grabbing a gluten free blueberry muffin to precede my gluten free egg sandwich with corned beef and cheddar. (The gluten free bread can be grilled separately in aluminum to help avoid cross-contamination.)

While all of the special sandwiches sound delicious, I love it when I can make my own sandwich. The egg sandwich is one of the build-your-own options. Just add your choice of meat and cheese! There is also a non-breakfast build-your-own option, but I was there for brunch, so the egg seemed appropriate to me, and beef and cheddar is one of my favorite flavor combinations. I have no regrets.

Carrigan Cafe is located at 101 South Ann Arbor Street in Saline. Hours are Monday through Saturday 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, visit carrigancafe.com, email carrigancafe@gmail.com, or call (734) 316-7633.

The Brahma Haus

It isn't often that I make it to Chelsea, but I always enjoy my trips. The Brahma Haus, centrally located across the street from the Jiffy Mixes plant, is a great place to stop in for lunch or dinner. (And if you live or work nearby, they also deliver.) Or just stop in for a quick ice cream fix.

The interior is an eclectic mix of interests. Next to the Puck's Sugar Cane Soda Fountain machine was a TARDIS, the iconic blue U.K. police box from the BBC TV show Doctor Who. Up the stairs from the TARDIS was a sign painted on the wall for Platform 9 ¾, a reference to the Harry Potter franchise. Several guitars are on display throughout the restaurant. Nods to hot rod culture dot the walls, and playing on the TVs while I dined was Netflix's Hyperdrive, a show about automobile drift racing that my husband and I really enjoy.

As for the menu, pick between several choices of plates, sandwiches or wraps, burgers, salads, soups, and an assortment of sides. There is a vegetarian-friendly Beyond Burger that could probably be made vegan upon request. I went with the Brahma chicken which comes with basmati rice, tandoori-fired naan bread, hummus, and Brahma sauce. (I gave the bread to my husband, who ate it the next day with lunch and reported that it reheats extremely well.)

I could tell with my first bite of food at The Brahma Haus, that it was made in-house.

I could tell with my first bite of food that it was housemade. The chicken reminded me of chicken that my mother used to grill when I was growing up. The curry-like Brahma sauce had some spice, but it enhanced the flavors rather than overpowered. If you prefer lots of heat, I suggest the Hot Chicken Sandwich that is "smothered in buffalo hot sauce." I added a pop and fries for a few extra bucks. The fries are thin and chip-like in shape, making them great for dipping in the hummus.

For only $12, you can build your own dinner. Simply choose one protein (gyro meat, Greek chicken, or falafel), then select one bread (naan or tortilla), two dinner sides, and your choice of sauce. Dinners also come with basmati rice. The side options are a baby salad, chickpea salad, Brahma fries, pita chips, tabouli, or hummus. It sounds like a lot of food, but the portions are not outrageous, as we often see at American restaurants, and the variety was a nice change from my usual chicken and vegetable dinner at home.

The Brahma Haus strives to source as many ingredients as possible from Michigan. According to their website, their meat comes from Knight's, and the ice cream bar is supplied with local favorite Guernsey ice cream. Such a sweet ending!

The Brahma Haus is located at 312 North Main Street in Chelsea. Curbside dinner service hours are Tuesday through Friday 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Email by 3 p.m. or call after 3 p.m. For more information, visit brahmahaus.com or call (734) 719-3550.

Loomi Cafe

When I saw that the space in the Kerrytown Shops formerly occupied by Kosmo was under construction, I was excited and anxious. What would it become? Would the new restaurant fit in? Would the food be tasty?

What started out as a unique food cart using a homemade tandoor for cooking, Loomi has blossomed into an indoor cafe with its own sizable lunch counter. (A tandoor is "a cylindrical clay or metal oven used in cooking and baking.") The menu is simple, changing often, but with some customizability. For example, choose between rice, bread, or potato to accompany your protein (chicken, beef, pork, or vegetarian). There are also some small plate options and a kid's menu with lower prices.

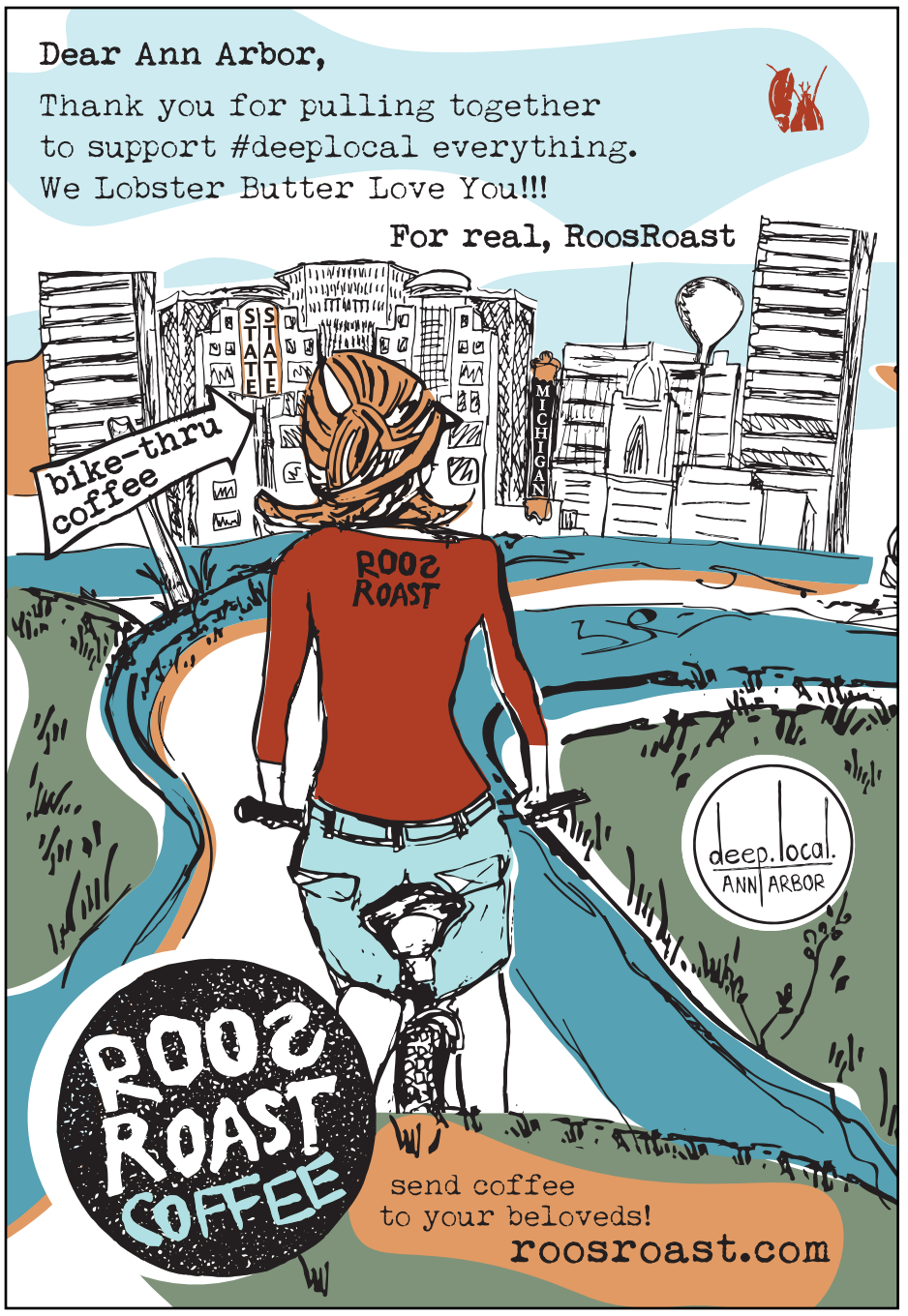
Loomi Cafe does not hold back on seasoning! If you love spices, this is definitely the restaurant for you. The fattoush salad, with its fresh and crisp jewel-tone vegetables, was well-seasoned and packed with intense flavor. The hara chicken was grilled to perfection, so juicy and full of flavor, and the accompanying aioli with tamarind added a contrasting sweetness. The beef skillet with plantains was a mix of sweet, sour, and spicy that I had to eat slowly while my sinuses drained (which can be a real boon during cold and flu season).

What started out as a unique food cart using a homemade tandoor for cooking, Loomi has blossomed into an indoor cafe with its own sizable lunch counter.

Loomi serves local favorite Roos Roast coffee as well as Turkish coffee, which, given its sweetness, I think would pair quite well with the spicy plates. I ordered a hot cup of black tea with cardamom, which I quite enjoyed. It was a bag tea by Ahmad Tea, a UK-based tea company that I was not familiar with but will keep an eye out for in the future because I liked it so much.

The style is fast-casual, where you order at the counter, are given a number, then the staff brings out your food when it's ready and checks on you throughout to make sure you're doing okay. There is more seating now than there was before Loomi moved in, but I have been told it can run out during neighboring Community High School's lunch time, so be mindful of the time when you decide to stop in.

Loomi Cafe is located inside Ann Arbor's Kerrytown Shops at 407 North Fifth Avenue. Hours are Monday through Thursday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday through Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, visit facebook.com/loomi.a2/, email loomicafe@gmail.com, or call (734) 929-2945.



Vestergaard Farms: Pasture-Raised Local Meats and Local Foods

By Angela Madaras

This past winter I was eager to visit the newly built storefront of Vestergaard Farm, attractively situated on the farm property. Along with their farm raised meat, the store offers other goods from Matty's Bakery in Saline, Zingerman's coffee and treats, Calder Dairy products, The Brinery products, Aldente Pasta, Amaizin Pop Popcorn, honey, bath products, maple syrup, eggs, and many other locally sourced items. The owner, Mike Vestergaard, and technical-marketing expert Sidd Vemuri, will be adding products slowly, as well as farm tours (when it is deemed safe), possibly ice cream, and eventually a fresh meat counter-butchery as time and funds allow. Even before the pandemic they were wanting to take one step at a time, and I respect that, as so many enter farming and retail with little understanding of financial reality. Their vision is still to be a "destination" spot for locals and tourists of all ages to walk around the farm, visit the animals, sip on complimentary coffee, and purchase locally sourced foods.

They also make it a priority to educate as to why their chicken, for example, might cost more than production raised chickens from the grocery store, and why Belted Galloway cows can pasture in Michigan winter and taste wonderful. People generally come back for more after eating their meat and understanding how well the animals are treated, and how expensive yet valuable regenerative-ethical farming can be. Sustainable land management takes the soil, water, animals, and people's welfare into account for future generations. The land sits on the Greenbelt which will keep it in agriculture for many years ahead. Vestergaard bought the historic farm in 2010 from Erwin Frederick and added the newly constructed USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) approved store. Only USDA approved meat can be sold here. The processors providing butcher services must be USDA approved as well.

Their vision is to be a "destination" spot for locals and tourists of all ages to walk around the farm, visit the animals, sip on complimentary coffee, and purchase locally sourced foods.

I sat with farmer Mike Vestergaard (a Danish born farmer with a bachelor's degree in Dairy Farm management from Ladelund Landbrugsskole), and Sidd Vemuri at a cozy table in the store as customers walked in and out with curious questions and happy faces. One man just dropped by for his regular cup of complimentary Zingerman's coffee. I asked if this was okay with them, and they responded favorably, because they want to be good neighbors while providing a place for community members to utilize, even if they are just grabbing a quick cup of free java. One of Vestergaard's sons was running the shop while being extremely helpful, knowledgeable, and eager to educate the customers about the farm and the products they sell. Both sons farm and work in the store, as well as attend college. I could see the hard work ethic this family shares, along with great energy and sincere smiles.

Vestergaard and Vemuri gave me valuable information, and offered inspirational ethical values about farming, livestock, place, process, and people. Vemuri showed off the photos hanging on the store's walls: Vestergaard's self-designed chicken hoop house "tractor", and their animals in vibrant, healthy pastures. Vemuri also explained his technical assets in setting up computer systems for the retail end of the business, sourcing products, marketing, and web management. Aspects of running a business that Vestergaard does not have the time to handle. I meet many farmers, but few with the passion and determination that Vestergaard displayed. You can tour the farm and meet some of their rare and heritage breed cows, pigs, and chickens during the warm weather.

…they want to be good neighbors while providing a place for community members to utilize, even if they are just grabbing a quick cup of free java.

According to Vestergaard Farm's website, animal welfare is priority number one. Properly and carefully managing the land for future generations is second. Being financially viable is third, but extremely important for farmers, animals, our community, and those who will inherit the farm and the land around it.

Pasture-based farming is an animal centered production model that incorporates the well-being of the animals, the land, and wildlife. Grazing on pasture fulfills the natural behavioral instincts of our farm animals. They enjoy better health with an appropriate diet and live in a low-stress environment. On pasture, they are healthier and happier which means less stress hormones in their meat. Stress hormones can take away the enjoyable flavor that naturally exists in free ranging livestock.

Pasture-based farming using rotational grazing methods restores natural ecosystems and wildlife habitat, reduces man's reliance on chemicals to make artificial fertilizers derived from fossil fuels, improves the soil, and reduces harmful greenhouse gases.

Small family farms provide jobs and strong economies in communities; creating sustainable businesses for succeeding generations.

I meet many farmers, but few with the passion and determination that Vestergaard displayed.

What is "Natural Meat" by Vestergaard's definition?

Their animals live close to how they would if they were on their own—though perhaps a bit more comfortably since they provide shelter, food, and clean water. They go indoors and out on their own. The only time they are confined indoors is when mothers are about to have babies or during inclement weather. In those cases, they are exclusively indoors during the week or so before delivery and a few weeks after.

The animals are fed a natural pasture-based diet. They eat grass for at least three seasons and, in winter, as the grass dies back, they are fed dried grasses such as hay. Vestergaard Farms grows its own hay and haylage, and doesn't use chemical

fertilizers and pesticides in their fields. Chickens and pigs are not ruminants and need some grain in their diets, but they are never fed GMO grains.

Vestergaard doesn't use prophylactic medications. On the rare occasions when it is called for, they will treat an animal that is ill with antibiotic or other appropriate medications. They do not think it is humane to let an animal suffer or die from a treatable illness. Animals who have received this kind of treatment aren't sold as natural meat.

Pasture-based farming is an animal-centered production model that incorporates the well-being of the animals, the land, and wildlife.

They never use farrowing crates, or cattle prods, or machinery to move their animals. Instead, Vestergaard Farms uses humane livestock handling guidelines, created by Temple Grandin, to use the animals' natural routines and tendencies to move them from place to place without stress.

Mike Vestergaard is concerned about a holistic approach to sustainable farming: improving the environment, protecting the animals, increasing the financial viability for farmers, and educating the public while feeding them local, delicious, nutrient-dense meat. "We follow organic principles in our production, but we are not certified organic. Becoming certified is a burdensome process, and it adds considerable cost without (we believe) adding additional value to the way we do things and to our products. We are proud of all we do and will be happy to show you around."

Visit Vestergaard Farms at 4408 S. Wagner Rd. Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103 or online at vestergaardfarms.com, or give them a call at (734) 929-2875. The farm is taking orders by phone and offering curbside delivery.

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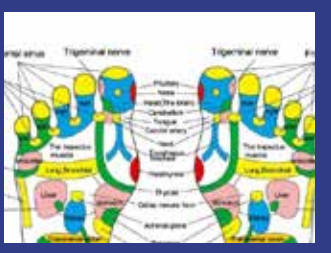

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Tea Time with Peggy

Tea for Energy

By Peggy A. Alaniz

To say that it is an interesting year would be an understatement. At best it feels like a surreal dream has covered the landscape of Michigan. Never in my life did I think that toilet paper would be worth more than gold, that I would long for more than just an intimate gathering of a few family members, that I would be sharing internet time with children going to school—let alone have the energy to keep up with them! Some days my brain is so foggy that I would need a better jump start than what a good strong cup of black or Oolong tea could offer. So, as an alternative to true tea, I have turned to tea combined with yerba mate.

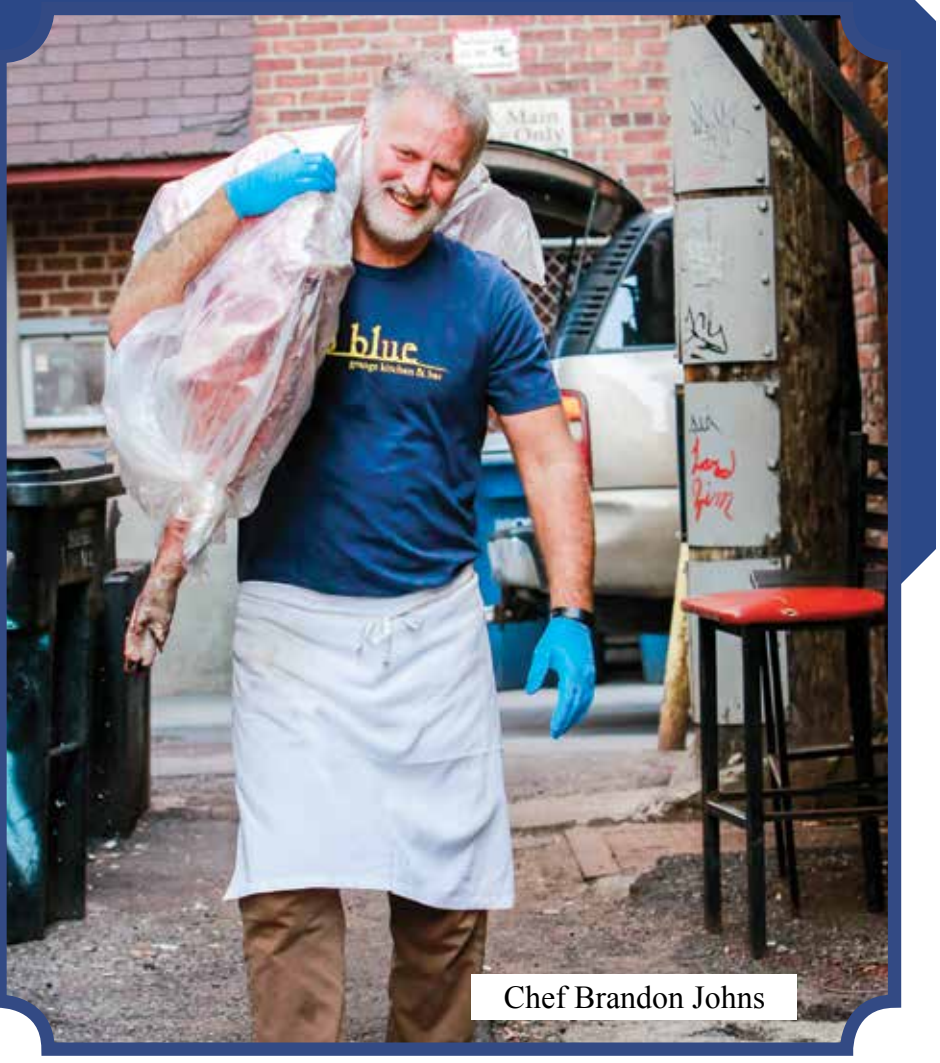
Yerba mate is an herb native to South America. It contains potassium, magnesium, and twice the caffeine of traditional black tea. To me it smells like hay. The earthy rich flavor comes through best when drinking it hot, however, I have been known to make iced tea with it. Yerba mate pairs well with peppermint and citrus, and I like it combined with black tea for a smother taste. Also, if I drink straight yerba mate, I become the obnoxious one in the household where even the children in my life ask if I will slow down. Basically, I am looking for a little pick me up from yerba mate, not a full-tilt-go-till-you-drop dose. The pick me up is nice because it does not have the crash that you get in those high-sugar energy drinks. I also do not drink it after 3 p.m. unless I plan on being up past midnight.

Yerba mate has a long list of health benefits. In addition to the temporary increase in energy it has been linked to improved mental focus, weight loss, extra stamina, lower cholesterol, as well as aiding in the control of sugar levels. Like true tea it is rich in antioxidants, contains seven out of nine essential amino acids, and almost every vitamin and mineral your body needs (in small amounts). Basically, it is a superfood you drink with a kick. Take that, kale spinach smoothy!

For a great morning kick start, steep equal parts black tea and yerba mate. In approximately one cup of water, then cool or poor over ice. After it has cooled, add an equal amount of orange juice so you have a combination of half tea mate mixture and half orange juice. Drink up and get going!

Peggy A. Alaniz is a tea enthusiast, former Celestial Seasonings Tour Guide, poet, and graduate of Naropa University. If you have questions concerning tea please email her at paalaniz.email.me@gmail.com.

The GRIT Behind the GRANGE



Chef Brandon Johns

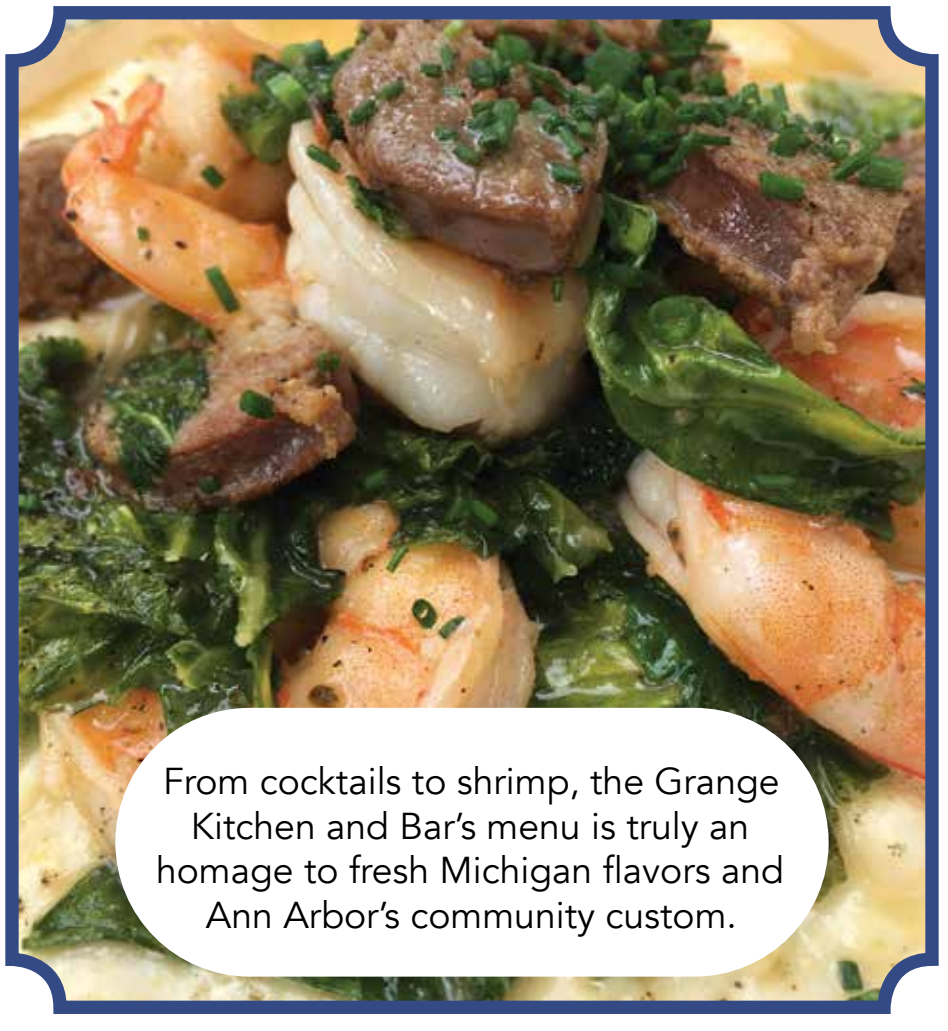
By Angela Madaras

"Join us for seasonal menus inspired by the fresh flavors of local farms and farmers' markets."

This is the best way Grange Kitchen and Bar can describe what they provide through their inspired kitchen and bar operating in an historic building in the Old West side of town. Their style is simple and elegant, but not pretentious. There is no dress code and all are welcomed to enjoy small plates, entrees, appetizers, and desserts with unique beverages, many fueled by one of the three partners who owns Ann Arbor Distillery. From cocktails to shrimp, the Grange Kitchen and Bar's menu is truly an homage to fresh Michigan flavors and Ann Arbor's community custom.

Grange Kitchen's Chef and owner, Brandon Johns, is responsible for bringing his culinary knowledge and experience to this location ten years ago after he worked as chef for The Real Seafood Company in Ann Arbor. He is an Arborite with a deep sense of concern for resilient and old-fashioned farm practices. Most members of his family, if not all, have operated a small-scale farm at one point in their lives. He proudly lists the farms by name on his ever-changing menus. His appreciation and connection to local farmers is deep and personal. He, and his staff, along with two other partners, Robert Cleveland (a long time friend and brother-in-law who owns Icon Creative Technologies and Ann Arbor Distilling Company), and Liam Ayers (also a local Ann Arborite and long time friend who is a protein specialist for Carmela Food Company), will host the Grange ten-year anniversary dinner at Old Brick Farm. This livestock farm is owned by Larry Doll, whom Johns considers one of the team. The dedication all of the team have for the fabulous sustenance they serve and the people attached to all the products and services they use is apparent.

On a cool summer day my husband and I had an extremely comforting brunch seated at a quaint outside table in front of Grange. It was a lovely meal of shrimp and grits, rich duck fat fries with roasted garlic mayo, breakfast tacos made with perfectly spiced house made chorizo, scrambled eggs, cheddar cheese, salsa verde and potatoes made just right, and three heat level varieties of homemade hot sauces. We also had a slice of almond and wild grape pie, Roos Roast coffee, and a cocktail called "Salty Dog"—their own version of a Greyhound with fresh grapefruit juice, vodka, and lime. My husband and I did not speak for a few minutes, just groaned and made other noises associated with satiated people eating freshly crafted food. The table next to us was in the same boat, except they were actually having a detailed conversation about each plate they ordered, the chef, the staff, and all that they obviously appreciated and knew well about Grange. Grange offers local food industry folks a discount to show mutual "props". I truly appreciate this level of respect and camaraderie. It also sparked a conversation between my husband and I and the couple at the next table. Great food and people having face-to-face conversation is convivial and rare!


From cocktails to shrimp, the Grange Kitchen and Bar's menu is truly an homage to fresh Michigan flavors and Ann Arbor's community custom.

My biggest pet peeve is when you go to a fine restaurant, and it is like a mausoleum inside. Good food should be joyful. There should be laughter and chatter, not people sitting there like they're in a funeral-parlor waiting room.

–Jim Harrison

I happily spent time conversing with Chef Brandon Johns over the phone, and had multiple email exchanges. He is humble and real: a true Michigander. Our trail of communication is found in the words below. I will also leave you pondering a quote from one of my favorite writers and Michigan native Jim Harrison, who also happened to be a hunter, food expert, and gourmand, for whom Grange threw a special dinner at his memorial with many of his favorite wines and fare.

Angela Madaras: What inspired you to support local and ethical meat in your restaurant and catering business?

Chef Brandon Johns: I started cooking seasonally a few years before opening Grange. At the time "seasonally" meant seasonally in California or Florida when things like strawberries or asparagus come into the commodity market. But, I realized, maybe going back to my childhood, that seasonal should be what is in season right around us, in the moment. After researching the local food scene in Ann Arbor and other areas of the country, I found many different farms that were raising their animals in a slower, old fashioned, natural way. This is better for the animals, better for the final product, and better for the environment. I was moved to search out farmers that used those types of methods.

Angela Madaras: Grange means farm in its simplest meaning. Explain why this farm to table concept grabbed you.

Chef Brandon Johns: Honestly it seemed like a simple, but not so obvious, reflection of what we are trying to do as a restaurant.

Angela Madaras: Can you give me an overview of your popular meat dishes and specialties that customers request more than others?

Chef Brandon Johns: I am proud that we use whole animals as often as possible, which challenges us to use every bit. That means we serve sausages, pates, and confits as well as the more mainstream steaks and chops. We change our menu very frequently, but the most requested and complemented item is our chicken. It is because we start with excellent chicken. We purchase local chickens from farmers with whom we have built a strong and long-term relationship. Larry Doll is one of those farmers who has been with us since we opened. In fact, we are having our ten-year staff party at his farm.

My husband and I did not speak for a few minutes, just groaned and made other noises associated with satiated people eating freshly crafted food.

AM: Where did you learn to cook?

CBJ: I had been in the front of the house in restaurants for five or six years before I went behind the line at Real Seafood Company. I have always had some interest in cooking throughout my life. I enjoyed watching my mother cook the usual family meals and I "helped" my dad grill burgers and such (I was in charge of spraying water to keep the flames down). I didn't think much of it at the time (who does when you're a teenager?), but I believe the interest was always there, waiting for the right time to emerge. At some point serving became tedious and boring so I started cooking at Real Seafood Company a couple days a week while still serving on others. That morphed into the sous chef job and then the chef job at Real Seafood Company. While I did learn a tremendous amount at Real Seafood Company, especially about fish, I was mostly self taught. After a couple of years I realized that this might be a career, so at age 30 I moved to New York City to go to school. I cooked for and learned from other chefs and restaurateurs.

AM: Was there a long past from which grew a man who loved all things food?

CBJ: It wasn't until later in life that I realized how much food was there for me growing up. If I had been told, even at 25, that I would be doing what I'm doing now, a chef and restaurant owner, I would have laughed. But now I believe it's always been there. Some of my most vivid and lasting memories are of food and cooking: scaling, gutting, and learning how to fillet perch and bluegills with my dad, skipping school to help him clean buckets and buckets of smelt in our basement, watching and helping fry said fish in cast iron pans, full of Crisco, watching my mom make dinner after dinner of green beans from our garden in various dishes all summer long, the way the house would smell when my mom was canning or pickling in the late summer, making jellies and jams, helping start the garden from a yard full of scrub brush and weeds, countless evenings grilling burgers, the sweet smell of Concord grapes that grew in our bushes every August, sitting on the shed roof with my sister eating sour cherries till our stomachs hurt, eating a perfectly ripe pear from the one tree we had, the type of flavor that starts to disappear the moment you pick a pear, watching my grandfather put sugar on ripe tomatoes if there wasn't anything for dessert. These are the memories that stuck with me.

AM: What type of people do you hire and share your space within the business? How important are the relationships to these folks?

CBJ: As a company we tend to attract like-minded individuals who believe in what we do at Grange. Working at Grange isn't easy, as the menu and ingredients change constantly, so there is a lot of moving parts and information to organize. It requires a bit more dedication than the usual restaurant. We currently have around 25 devoted employees.

AM: Do your family and friends share the same enthusiasm for food?

CBJ: They do, for the most part. For example, my oldest daughter has worked at Argus for the last two years. My sister has a huge garden and chickens and is very supportive of Grange. When I was growing up my mom spent many hours putting up seasonal food in the summers.

AM: Tell me about the now infamous Jim Harrison Memorial Dinner you prepared after he passed away.

CBJ: Since Jim Harrison was such a gourmand, we came up with the idea of teaming up with Literati and creating a dinner of items entirely pulled from various Jim Harrison writings. Since his food references are endless, I had to narrow the dinner

down to “just” seven courses. Excerpts were read during the dinner as well. It was a blast researching and executing the dinner.

AM: Who are some of your food mentors?

CBJ: Chef Simon Pesusich of Main Street Ventures taught me all about fish. Chef John Hogan helped me learn classic French techniques, and Richard Andres of Tantre Farms continues to teach me about organic farming and philosophy.

AM: Where do you eat when you eat out?

CBJ: Locally my favorites are: The Lunch Room, Lan City Noodles, Casablanca, and Cardamom.

AM: How and where do you shop for your seasonally changing menu? Explain your food sourcing a bit.

CBJ: We have built a network of farmers for all of our produce. We trade emails and text messages. Although some farmers do deliver, we generally pick things up at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market. We also do a fair share of shopping at Argus Farm Stop. We do have a couple of local purveyors that provide us with local meats and dairy as needed. Cherry Capital, Eat Local Eat Natural, as well as Carmela Foods all have connections with certain local entities.

> I realized, maybe going back to my childhood, that seasonal should be what is in season right around us, in the moment.
>
> —Brandon Johns

AM: What would you choose to be your last meal, and who would prepare it?

CBJ: I would prepare the meal. I believe that would give me the most pleasure. Doing what I always do. I would be surrounded by my friends and family, just like the many Sunday dinners we’ve had over the years. I would be gruff and grumpy and complaining about having to always cook, but I would not want it any other way—and everyone would know it. As far as what to serve, well, it would be what I felt like cooking and eating that day. My “favorite” foods always seem to change with my mood, but for sure the cooking and the meal would start with bubbly and end with whiskey. And probably lot’s of both.

AM: I have been to many events, and even volunteered, where you prepared food. I find it amazing how calm and fun you make it seem. I sensed *zero* stress from you, only joy. How do you keep the joy when "the fire is hot" in every sense?

CBJ: I do like what I do, feeding people and hopefully making folks happy. Working as a team. Serving products that I believe in. Honestly, I would rather have fun than stress out. Maybe it’s just a state of mind. At least it works for me at most big events.

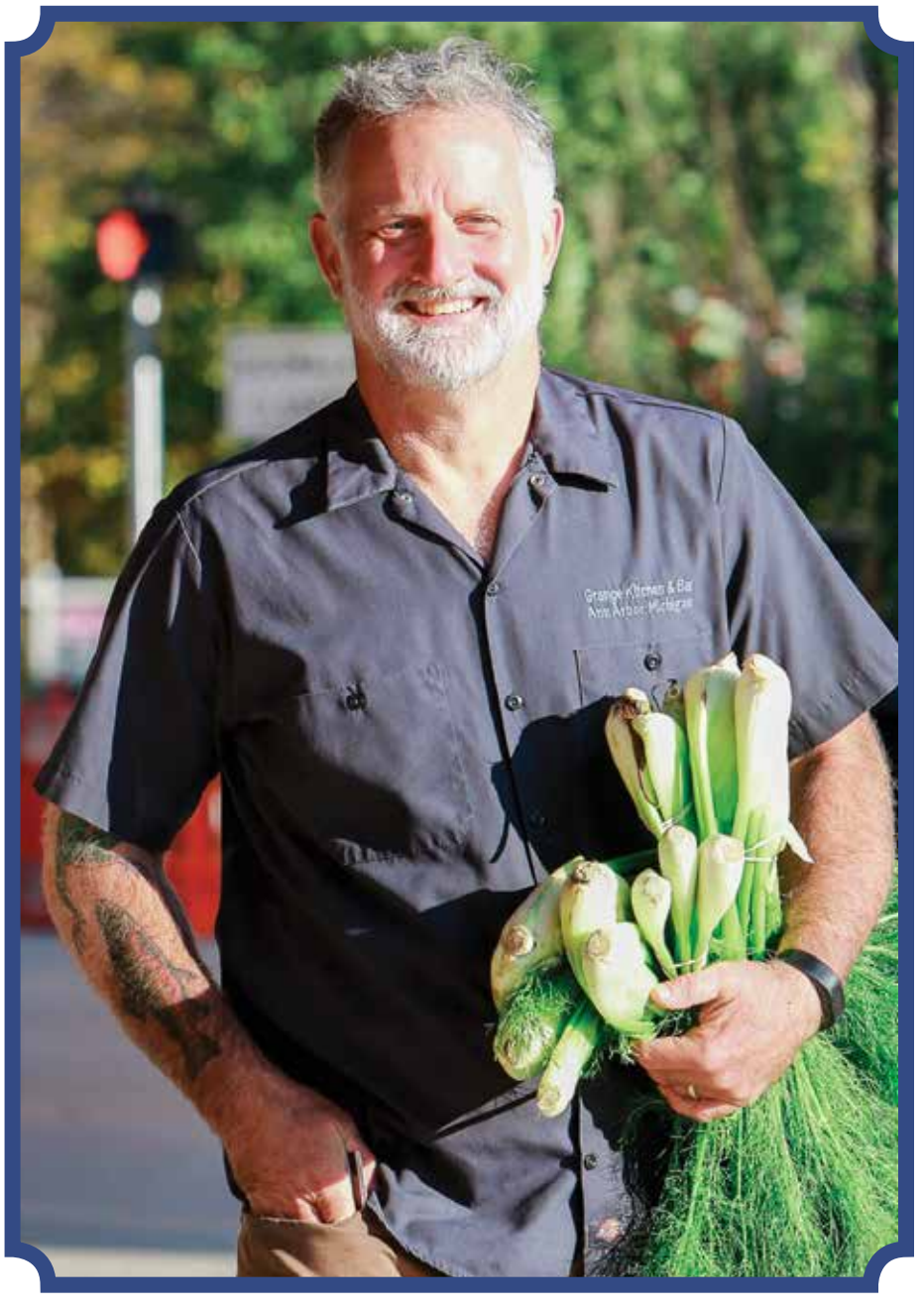
AM: You seem to build very close customer and supplier relationships. How important is this to you?

CBJ: Perhaps the most surprising outcome of our local sourcing is the relationships that we have built over the years with the farmers and growers. It’s not surprising now, but going into this journey that wasn’t something I thought about. However, it has been one of the most important things, especially considering the lack of community and real relationship building that seems so prevalent in today’s social media world.

AM: Lastly what is your favorite food moment?

CBJ: There are so many tasty dishes, but roasting game birds on a string on the side of the Fox River in the U.P. does stand out. There is nothing like the meat, the fire, the sound of the water, and good friends.

The Grange Kitchen is located at 118 West Liberty Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. They are open Wednesday through Saturday 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. and offering curbside pickup Wednesday through Saturday 5 p.m. - 9 p.m and Sunday brunch is being served from 10am – 3pm. They have a new online carryout shop for easy carryout ordering and contactless payment. Visit grangekitchenandbar.square.site to learn more.



> Some of my most vivid and lasting memories are of food and cooking: scaling, gutting, and learning how to fillet perch and bluegills with my dad, skipping school to help him clean buckets and buckets of smelt in our basement, watching and helping fry said fish in cast iron pans…
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> —Brandon Johns

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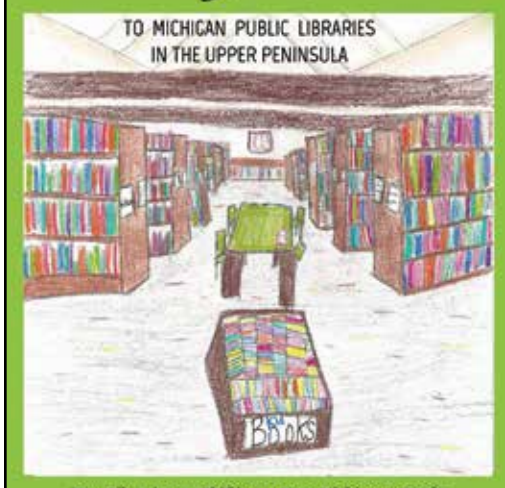

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Preserving the Emerald Arc:

The Legacy Land Conservancy Celebrates 50 Years

By Sandor Slomovits

In 2021, the Legacy Land Conservancy will be celebrating its 50th anniversary.

The Conservancy is a nonprofit, the first certified land trust in Michigan and one of the first in the nation, was originally named the Washtenaw Land Trust (WLT) and was founded in 1971 by a number of people in Ann Arbor to protect the Bird Hills Nature Area and other land along the Huron River. Legacy has grown from that modest beginning to holding 82 conservation easements and seven nature preserves, protecting over 9,200 acres of land in Washtenaw and Jackson Counties.

To learn more about Legacy's history, accomplishments, and future goals, I communicated with a number of people who are connected to Legacy's past, present, and future. I began with Diana Kern, 57, who became Legacy's Executive Director at the beginning of 2019, and Scott Rosencrans, also 57, who is Associate Director of Development and Communications.

Sandor Slomovits: How would you describe the Legacy Land Conservancy, and what you do? What is the most important thing to know about Legacy?

Diana Kern: The most important thing to know is that we are *the* non-profit for Washtenaw and Jackson Counties that works on conserving land, protecting water quality, agricultural land, and other important natural land, including woodlands and wetlands. Washtenaw and Jackson Counties are our main focus. A few projects are outside that area, but all are along the same four major rivers: the Grand, the Raisin, the Huron, and the Kalamazoo. Our service area covers portions of those four watersheds. We're helping to make sure that land is conserved properly for future generations, for everyone's benefit and use.

Scott Rosencrans: We have seven natural area preserves, which is not worked land, but is home to a lot of animal species that are listed as endangered or at risk, and so [natural preserves are] a great step for protecting nature.

Diana Kern: We're not conserving land within the city limits. We don't do parks, so any land that we place in a preserve is a *natural* preserve. It's woodchipped trails, no paved parking lots, no bathroom facilities—just a natural preserve.

What is the Emerald Arc?

The land and rivers that form a natural boundary for the work of the Legacy Land Conservancy and includes state parks: Waterloo, Pinckney, and Sharonville, the Huron, Raisin, Kalamazoo, and Grand rivers, privately held natural areas, and farmland nestled into the arc formed by these places throughout Washtenaw and Jackson counties.

Legacy has grown from [a] modest beginning to holding 82 conservation easements and seven nature preserves, protecting over 9,200 acres of land in Washtenaw and Jackson Counties.

Scott Rosencrans: There's a similar model within Ann Arbor city limits; for example, our natural area parks, Dolph, Bird Hills, places like that. You won't see as many way-finding signs or amenities in our preserves, but the concept is very similar.

At the same time, by placing conservation easements on farms where the current landowners want to do that, we're providing a future for folks who might want to get into the farming world. The easement makes it more sustainable and doable for those interested in farming.

Sandor Slomovits: How does placing a conservation easement on your property work?

Diana Kern: The land owners still own their land, they pay their own taxes, but they're restricted per the agreement that we sign—which is called a conservation easement—and that conservation easement places restrictions on that land forever. So if a farmer wishes to place an agricultural easement, he is ensuring that, past himself, that land is never developed—it does not become a Walmart, it's not subdivided into home lots—it will forever be an agricultural space. The next person who purchases that land will actually inherit the conservation easement, as the easements stay with the land, not with the owners. Whether it's natural space, wooded lots, wetlands, or farmland, that's what a conservation easement does. It ensures that the land stays in its natural use.

Sandor Slomovits: Land conservancy has become a nationwide movement. What was it that sparked the movement fifty years ago?

Whether it's natural space, wooded lots, wetlands, or farmland, that's what a conservation easement does. It ensures that the land stays in its natural use.

Diana Kern: There were some legislative changes, IRS changes, that allowed for landowners to work with a land trust, which was the name that was used back then, to conserve land. Those changes really came out of a fear that we were going to end up developing all of our beautiful land. So those tax laws which came into effect allowed for non-profits to form that would assist landowners in placing conservation easements. And for some landowners, there's quite a fair tax benefit for doing this.

Slomovits: Is that the main benefit they receive, that they get some tax relief?

Kern: Some do. Land is appraised at a certain value, and if that land can potentially be used for development of any kind, it has a higher value. Once you remove those development rights, you decrease the value. So, in some cases that provides a tax benefit for the landowner. On farms there are some similar federal programs. If a farmer is going to ensure that the land stays in agricultural production forever, there are federal programs that actually, through us, pay the farmer, and they receive that benefit now. A lot of farmers are land rich and cash poor. They can place conservation easements, and hopefully that gives them some funding to be able to live decently now and or make improvements on their farm. And then they're also getting the benefit of knowing that their farm is always going to be in agriculture.

There are also many who just come to us and say, "Listen, this land has been in our family for 100 years, and none of my kids live in the area, no one wants the land or the house. I want to ensure that whatever happens to me, that this land is conserved." So sometimes the easements are done through a living trust; somebody, while they're still alive, will set up the conservation easement within their living trust, and when they pass, that land is going to be conserved. Whoever it goes to will inherit that conservation easement; they can't go build on that beautiful 100 -year-old forest.

Photo by Kateri Fahey

> I grew up in the country, on a dirt road. There's still a lot of those in Michigan. Growing up in the country, that was part of who I became and cared about.
>
> —Diana Kern

Slomovits: How did each of you come to this work? What in your childhood, or family history, led you here?

Kern: I was born and raised in Michigan, in Oakland County, Milford-Highland area. I grew up in the country on a dirt road. There's still a lot of those in Michigan. Growing up in the country, that was part of who I became and cared about. I never wanted to live in a big city. As I grew up, I also watched the community change significantly. The Highland and Milford that I saw when I was growing up are completely different now. And I felt that some of that change took away some of the really wonderful natural aspects of the community. So I've always been interested in conserving what I consider to be part of our culture and ensuring that people can have access to and engage with nature. I'm also an avid bird watcher, have been since I was younger, so I care a lot about habitat for pollinators.

I worked for 17 years in the for-profit world and then decided that I wished to leave that world, and since then have been in the non-profit world. I've worked for three different non-profits, and this opportunity came around. I was approached by some people, and I said, "Oh my God, this is my dream, to come here."

> My family kind of moved around when I was a kid, but the place I always found myself the most comfortable was running around in the woods, building tree forts, playing in the creeks, looking for crayfish and tadpoles. That was my thing.
>
> —Scott Rosencrans

Slomovits: What were you doing in the for-profit and non-profit worlds?

Kern: I was in real estate. I worked for one of the largest companies, McKinley, for 17 years. It was great and a wonderful learning experience, and then some things in my life changed, and I was finding if I got up in the morning and I had some of my non-profit work to do, I was super happy, but if I had to get back on a plane and fly to God knows where, I was not happy. So I made a decision that what I really wanted to do was be in the non-profit world. I worked for the New Center in Ann Arbor for ten years, then I worked for about three years for Our Sight, which is the State of Michigan's eye bank.

Slomovits: What about you, Scott?

Rosencrans: Similar background. My family kind of moved around when I was a kid, but the place I always found myself the most comfortable was running around in the woods, building tree forts, playing in the creeks, looking for crayfish and tadpoles, that was my thing.

Slomovits: Where did you grow up?

Rosencrans: Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. When I was in my early teens, I worked on a farm that was owned by a friend's family. We would bale hay every year, we worked in the woods clearing trails—I enjoyed being outside. When I turned 14, I had my first involvement with the environmental world when I became a volunteer for Greenpeace, which at the time was a fairly new organization. I was hooked from there, and since then I've always had my hands in serving the greater good, often as a key volunteer, but just as often on staff. And while I was doing volunteer work, I would find a way to make a living in other ways. I was a general contractor here in Ann Arbor, I worked in factories, did a couple of different lines of work. But, back in 2007, John Hieftje (then Mayor of Ann Arbor) appointed me to the Parks Advisory Commission. We also preserved natural areas as well as active recreation parks, and I was on the Land Acquisition Committee as well, and something sort of clicked in me. I hadn't finished my bachelor's yet, and I went to my wife and said, "I found the work that I love. It just doesn't pay me anything."(Laughter)

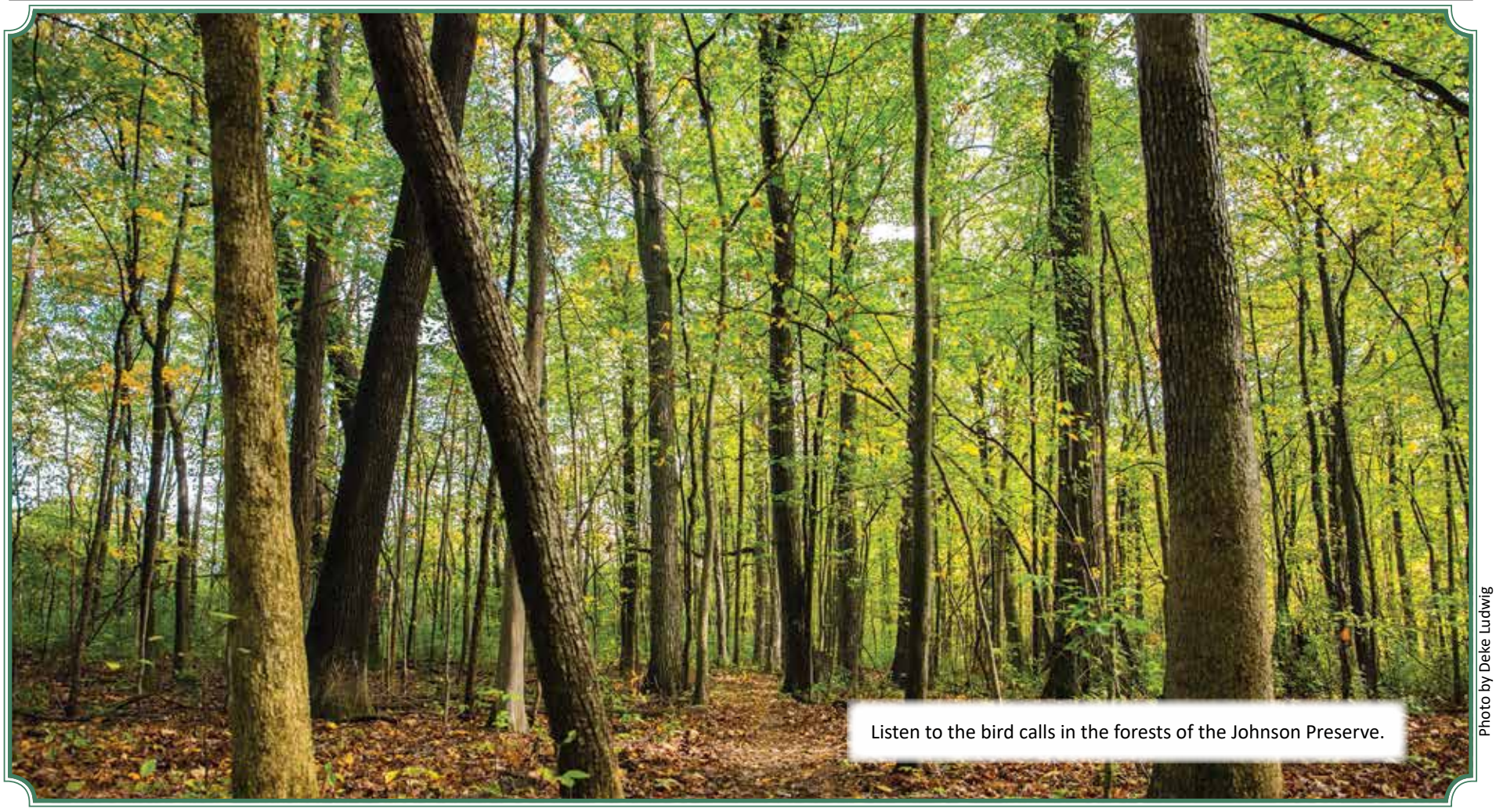
Slomovits: So, you went back to school?

Rosencrans: Yeah, I finished my degree at the age of 50, took my life out of that two-track working regimen, and dedicated the rest of my [working] life to service for the greater good. I've worked with a number of organizations. I had a consulting firm for a while, but really my heart has always been in the outdoors and in the environment. Diana and I'd worked on a project or two in the past, and when I found out that this opening existed, I jumped at the chance to work with her and the field that we're in. It's a perfect fit for me.

Slomovits: What are Legacy's future goals?

Kern: In the beginning, when this was a newer concept, it really was conserving land that everyone wanted to not see developed. And I want to be clear that here at Legacy we're not saying, "conserve everything!" You don't want to do that, actually. It's the high-quality land that adds to water quality, carbon sequestration, and natural habitat use [that we want to conserve]. Back in the beginning years, it was "place as many easements as we can" to start conserving land, so everything is not developed. Where it's been more recently is looking strategically at what kind of criteria, we should be looking at in order to work with the landowner to place a conservation easement. We're not going to place easements on tiny parcels, there's not much value to that, but larger swaths of land, farmlands that we want to preserve, wetlands, there's things called fens—which are natural areas where water filters—and space for habitat, those are the types of things we look at now, that's where people are focused. That's the future, and then for Michigan it's all about water quality.

Sandor: Has that changed since Flint?



Listen to the bird calls in the forests of the Johnson Preserve.

Photo by Deke Ludwig

LEGACY Land Conservancy

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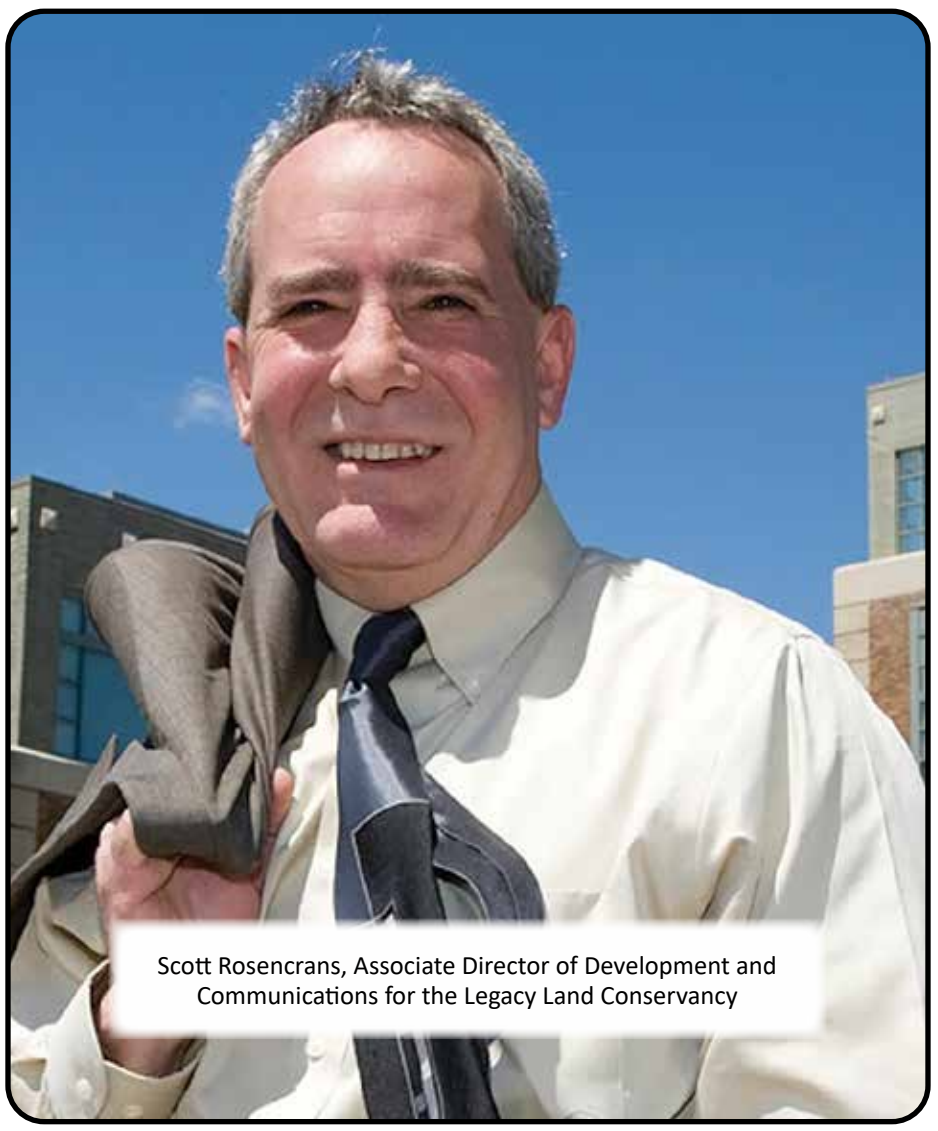
Kern: It's changed since PFAS.

Sandor: Of course, PFAS!

Kern: Yes, and Flint, and all these spills, and Line 5, and… There's all kinds of things happening in this state. Twenty percent of the world's fresh water is in Michigan! Those four rivers that cut through this area, all of those at some point, through the tributaries and the ground water, all run to one of the Great Lakes. So it's really looking at what we can do to help protect the water quality. That is a big focus right now.



Scott Rosencrans, Associate Director of Development and Communications for the Legacy Land Conservancy

Diana Kerns, Executive Director of the Legacy Land Conservancy

And another focus is farmland. We've lost a lot of acres of farmland in Washtenaw and Jackson counties over the years. There are really big concerns about that [the loss of farmland]. Farmland is another focus area and helping to educate farmers about conservation practices so that they can be partners at the table in protecting water quality. There are a lot of great groups that have formed, farmer-led conservation groups. That's really where the direction of land conservation is going, I think.

Rosencrans: Water needs to percolate through the land before going into the aquifers and the tributaries; that's a critical part of keeping the water supply clean. [Land conservation] efforts really contribute a great deal in that direction. Another environmental benefit is being able to have a quick trip from the farm to the grocery store instead of having it shipped across the country. The carbon footprint, the environmental impact of having local farms operating, is considerable, and, frankly, I think the food is better, but that's just my opinion. (Laughter) There are a lot of environmental benefits to preserving these lands.

I met two other key Legacy staff members. Dana Wright serves as Legacy's Land Stewardship Director and is primarily responsible for monitoring all of Legacy's easements, while Allene Smith, who is Legacy's Land Stewardship Coordinator, oversees Legacy's seven nature reserves. I tagged along with each of them to get a sense of what their jobs entail.

Dana Wright, Director of Land Stewardship

Being connected to the natural world on a daily basis is my heritage. A career to protect that world and foster in other people the type of connection with nature that I was allowed to have as a child, is a path I've always enjoyed.
—Dana Wright

Dana Wright, Director of Land Stewardship

Wright, 45, has a bachelor's degree in Environmental Biology from Michigan State University and has worked with The Nature Conservancy, the Leslie Science and Nature Center, and with Natural Area Preservation of the City of Ann Arbor. She's been working at Legacy since 2009, and in her first year there she launched the volunteer program to help with Legacy's monitoring responsibilities. Annual monitoring of every one of the easements that a land trust like Legacy holds is an accreditation requirement of the Land Trust Alliance, the national association for all land trusts in the U.S. What that means in practical terms is that once every year Wright, and her crew of volunteers, visits every one of the 82 easements that Legacy currently holds. In addition, Legacy works as a contractor doing monitoring for several other organizations, including Washtenaw County Parks, who also hold conservation easements. Legacy conducted these site visits on an additional 26 properties in 2019. The combined acreage of these 108 properties adds up to almost 6,000 acres, some farmland, much of it forested, and a good smattering of wetlands.

In mid-December on a mostly sunny day, I went with Wright on a site visit to Dale and Julia Frey's dairy farm on the west side of Ann Arbor. When we arrived at the farmhouse, Wright introduced herself to Julia Frey, who pointed us toward the barn where her husband was working with a couple of other men. We walked over, Wright introduced herself again, explained what she had come to do, and we chatted for a few minutes. Dale Frey was clearly familiar with the purpose of the visit, and Wright asked only one question pertaining to the easement, "Anything new planned for next year?" Frey said he was not planning to make any changes and, after chatting with him for another few minutes, Wright headed toward the wooded part of his property.

Wright carried a small electronic tablet that she consulted regularly. I asked her about it.

Wright: We use a GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping system. A geographic information system is software for gathering, matching, and analyzing geographic data. I'm using an app that was made by the same person who made the database. This program has our map of the property on it and all the photo points that we took during the baseline documentation. I can see where all the photo points are, and if I want to recreate them, I can go to that point. Then when I take a picture it records the direction I'm facing, creates the GPS point, and stores

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Allene Smith, the Land Stewardship Coordinator for Legacy Land Conservancy

the picture and the point and automatically syncs with our database. If I want to reference that picture in the future, I would open the database, choose this property, and go to that point—all the pictures are there, and it says what direction they were taken in. It also records where we walked, and that's one of the Land Trust Alliance standards; for each monitoring visit you have to record where you walked. You don't need to take pictures every time, but you do need to have it recorded, and this software does it automatically.

Slomovits: Very high tech! What was it like before the digital age?

Wright: The first year I started with Legacy we had a bunch of maps of the properties. The maps were really old, and the focal points were created by putting stickers on the map, little pieces of paper (she giggles delightedly) and then they were copied a bunch of times, they were black and white—they were terrible. So, I created a new set of maps, in color, for all of the properties.

Slomovits: When did you go digital?

Wright: That first year the best I could do was make new maps. The second or third year I received a grant and secured GPS units for all the volunteers. We learned how to use GPS and began using the GPS to track where we were on the property and to mark where we took photo points. The most important thing is to be able to see where you are on the property [in order] to know whether you're on the [property] line or not, if there's a new structure, or where the corner of the lot is, if there's something that's going on near that line. Also, just knowing where you were, that helped a lot. We used the GPS units for three or four years. I had uploaded maps onto the GPS units, one for each property, and the volunteers would use them and bring them back to the office, and I would export the information, and they would send me pictures, and they would fill out a report, so three different things had to be done for each property we were visiting.

> We have these public preserve properties for a number of reasons. One is the ecologies they support, for ecosystems to be maintained, it's habitat. But then, very much in tandem with that is the fact that these are also places we want to make available for people to visit, to make connections with the natural world, and feel safe and welcome.
>
> —Allene Smith

Slomovits: And now all that is done automatically.

Wright: Right. Now all of that is basically done with the tablet, but there's still some things for which they [the volunteers] have to load directly into the database. They enter in things like when I was talking to Dale, I asked him if he had any plans for the next year. That's a question that we ask just to remind them that if they have any special plans, oftentimes it's something that we need to give permission for beforehand.

Sandor: If, for example, they decide to put up a new structure?

Wright: Yes. The farmers are usually very familiar with what's in their easement, so they wouldn't do something that's not allowed, but they do have to ask for permission. They have to send us the plans, and then we come out and look at the area, whatever is in the plans, and say, "Yeah, looks great," and then they can go ahead and do it.

As we were walking in the woods, I saw a deer blind in one of the trees and asked Wright about it. I also asked whether farmers are allowed to cut down trees for firewood.

Wright: Most farms have a woodlot and farmers are allowed to harvest deadwood for firewood as well. As far as hunting, we only have two or three easements that don't allow hunting.

Sandor: How does enforcement work if you do spot a deer blind in one of your preserves?

Wright: What we did this year was, we posted on the gridline that this was private property, hunting is not allowed, please take your blind down or we'll remove it, and gave them a date on which it would be removed. And we ended up taking two down.

Sandor: When you say we, does that mean Legacy staff?

Wright: Yeah. Allene (Smith) and I went out together and did that.

> We don't have a dedicated person at Johnson, but at several of the other preserves, we have what we call preserve-adopters—people who visit frequently enough. once a month or so, to be able to catch things like trees over the trails.
>
> —Allene Smith

Slomovits: Do you monitor the properties all year or just during warmer weather?

Wright: Because I have volunteers, I hold a training every year, and so we have a definite monitoring season. I usually do my training in March, and we end all our monitoring in December because it has to be done within a calendar year. Some of the more experienced monitors will do a property before the training. Properties get monitored the same month they were monitored the year before. We have 30 some volunteers for the monitoring. They work in teams and monitor between two and ten properties each team. They do the site visits, collect the data, use a tablet like we did, take pictures, and show where they walked on the property.

We have one volunteer who has been with us every year since that first year I started the volunteer monitoring program, and there are a lot of people who have been with us for a long time. Landowners get attached to the person who's come before. It's good for them to have a relationship. You heard Dale say, "Oh, no Robin this year?" (Dale Frey had asked about the person who'd done the monitoring on his property the past few years.) That consistency is great for the program.

Allene Smith, Land Stewardship Coordinator

Allene Smith, 31, began working at Legacy four years ago. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Plant Biology from Western Michigan University, and before coming to Legacy, worked with The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Forest Service, and the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. One of her primary responsibilities at Legacy is overseeing, maintaining, restoring, and managing Legacy's public nature preserves, so that the properties maintain their conservation value. (Legacy does not do land management, removing invasive species for example, on the properties on which they hold conservation easements, but does do that on the preserves.) She decides what kinds of restoration projects will be done, organizes and directs volunteers in doing the work, leads nature walks, and also works on Legacy's Land Acquisition efforts.

In early January, on a windy, overcast day, I met Allene Smith at the Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Preserve, off Platt Road, next to Lillie Park South. We started from the small parking lot, next to some Project Grow garden plots, and moved onto a mowed trail that weaved through waist high prairie plants on our way to the wooded section of

Board Member, Charity Steere.

Legacy Staff Photo

Creekshead Nature Preserve is a forested oasis with a spectacular spring wildflower display.

the preserve. Smith carried a small electric chainsaw, and I asked her what she was planning to do on this visit.

Smith: Today is a general visit, I'm going to walk the trails, and if there are any trees over the trail, I'll get those out of the way with the chain saw. We have these public preserve properties for a number of reasons. One is the ecologies they support, for ecosystems to be maintained, its habitat. But then, very much in tandem with that is the fact that these are also places we want to make available for people to visit, to make connections with the natural world, and feel safe and welcome. So a big part of that is trail maintenance. That's at the top of the list.

Slomovits: Do people cross country ski here?

Smith: I don't think people do at this preserve, though they are welcome to. I know we get a lot of skiers at our Sharon Hills Preserve in Manchester because it's very hilly. Each preserve property is pretty distinct. The Johnson Preserve, I wouldn't call it an urban preserve, but it's closer to people than many of our others, so therefore we get more volunteer interest here. Also, the Johnson Preserve was the only property on which there was agricultural land, so for much of the time that Legacy has owned this property, we leased the ag land to a farmer, but then in the spring of 2016, we started the prairie restoration for that part of the land. The first choice was to keep it in agriculture and simply change the type of agriculture, but when there wasn't anyone interested in farming the land, that's when we decided to change it over to a more natural ecosystem. We worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service; they have some cost share programs that help landowners with farmland that they don't want to farm anymore, to convert it to prairie habitat. We got some help getting the seeds, planting the seeds in the ground, and now we work with them in an ongoing way to manage it.

> I HAVE GOTTEN A LOT OF CREDIT FOR THIS OVER THE YEARS, BUT IN TRUTH, IF CREDIT IS GOING WHERE IT'S DUE, IT WAS THE BOARD THAT STARTED LOOKING AT MAPS, AND REALIZED WHAT HAD BEEN IN FRONT OF US ALL THE TIME.
>
> —Susan Lackey

The Johnson Preserve woodland trails get a considerable amount of activity—the prairie trails not as much. When the prairie was a farm field, we didn't direct people there actively, but now that we have transitioned that part of the preserve, we've expanded the trails, and we're trying to call people out there more. Johnson gets a lot of walkers [because] it's near where people live.

As we walked through the woods, we came across several dead ash trees that had fallen across the trail. Smith cut them into manageable pieces with her chainsaw, and we moved them off the trail. We found an uprooted tree, arching across the

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trail, hung up in the branches of nearby trees. It was too big for her saw, and she made a note to come back and deal with it another day. We came to a stretch of boardwalk and, though the ground was dry, I asked if it got wet in the warmer months.

Smith: Yes, right here is a buttonbush swamp. The trails that encircle it, which are kind of the main feature of the preserve, they get really swampy. We allow bikes at this preserve only, not at our others, and so that has some impact on the trails, especially when they're wet, so we've had some boardwalks here before, but we needed more. This stretch of boardwalk is brand spankin' new, put in just this past summer, by an Eagle Scout who brought volunteers with him to help with the project. He took the lead on it, making it happen. There's another wetland loop here, an offshoot loop that was put in in 2017 by a group of teens from the Neutral Zone. They put in about a half mile of trail winding through the woods. One of the parents of one of the teens who put in this trail was legally blind. As these teens and their parents took the first hike down the whole completed trail, this young woman and her sister, one on either elbow, were guiding their parent. It was a really beautiful thing to see, not only the familial love, but also that this person, who maybe didn't have opportunities to be in a woodland very frequently, was able to do that.

My first brush with the consequences of development occurred when I was in first grade. Every day I walked to and from the one-room country school just down the road. When Interstate 127 was built, the construction went across our road right between our house and my school.

—Charity Steere

A bit further along the trail we found another fallen dead ash tree across the boardwalk. Smith sawed it in two, and we moved it off the trail. She said that sometimes she's had to replace boards damaged by fallen trees.

Slomovits: How do you track what needs to be done at each preserve?

Smith: We're available enough that we can be found through our website by the public if there are issues. People call or email about problems. We don't have a dedicated person at Johnson, but at several of the other preserves, we have what we call preserve-adopters—people who visit frequently enough, once a month or so, to be able to catch things like trees over the trails. I'm in communication with those folks relatively frequently, and if there are issues that are beyond what they feel comfortable handling, I take over. There's a stalwart volunteer who mows the trails at our Sharon Hills Preserve, and we also have a caretaker at our Reichert Nature Preserve near Pinckney. She lives there with her family, and they're very present. In the summertime, when we're doing a lot of stewardship work, land management work, I or one of our stewardship crew members visit almost weekly. Especially on days when I'm feeling stir crazy and want to get the heck out of the office, it's great to [be able to say,] "You know I haven't been to Johnson in a little bit." I'll go walk around, make sure everything is looking like it should.

Susan Lackey, Executive Director, 2005-2016

I also corresponded with Susan Lackey, who served as Legacy's Executive Director until her retirement in 2016. She began in that role in 2005 for Washtenaw Land Trust (WLT), the organization that eventually evolved into Legacy. Prior to coming to WLT, she was president of the Washtenaw Development Council.

Slomovits: How did you become interested in land conservation?

Susan Lackey: I became interested in sustainable development and the need to maintain quality of place for communities that were going to prosper in the 21st century, which lead me to conservation. Or, maybe, back to conservation. I began my career doing rural regional planning in Southwest Michigan, where I grew up, shifted to urban economic development in Benton Harbor, and then came to Washtenaw Development in 1994. In all these jobs, the nature of the place was critical to success, since without a strong sense of place, it's difficult to attract or keep people.

Slomovits: What in your childhood, or family history, may have led you to do this work?

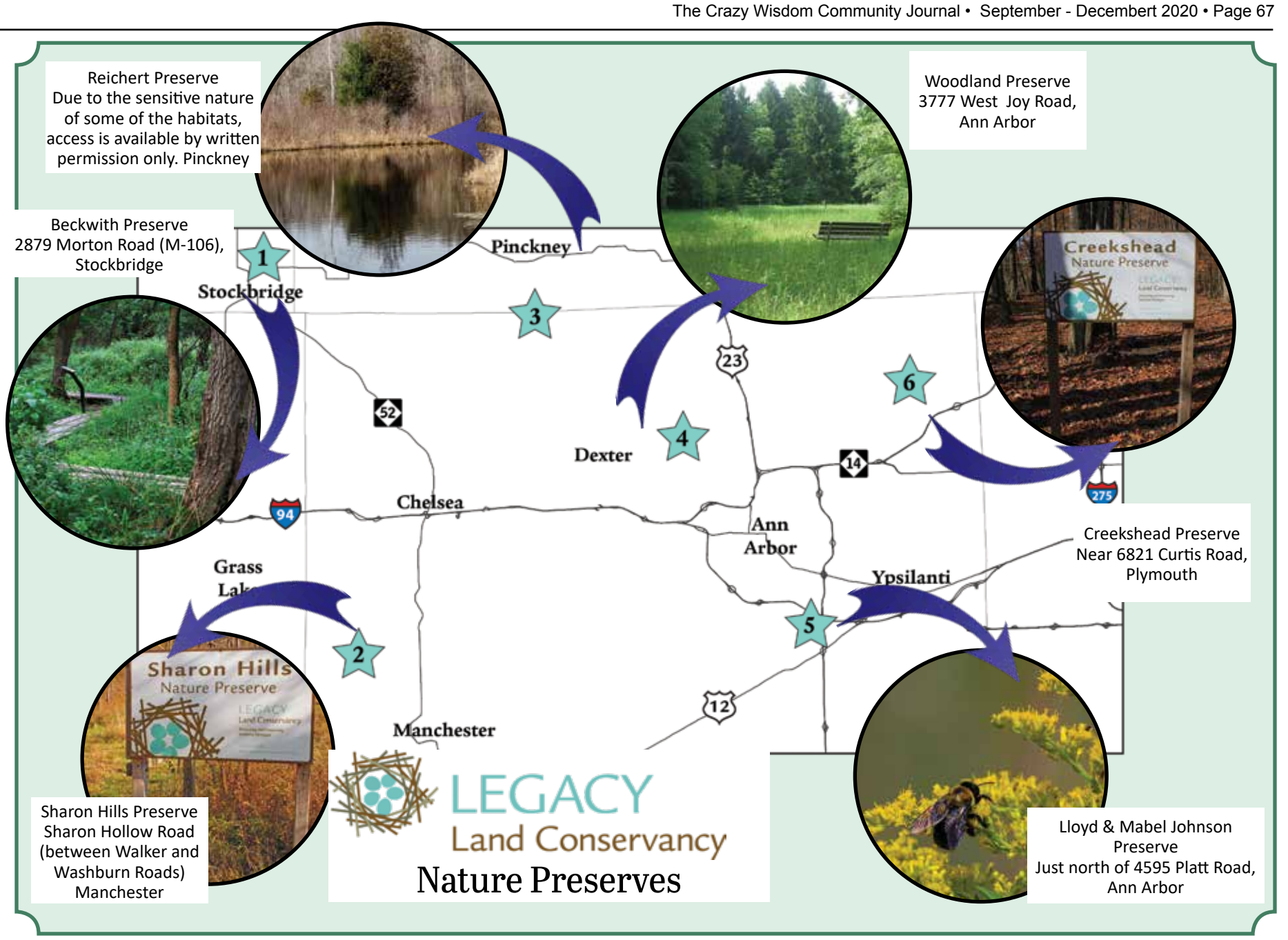
Susan Lackey: I grew up on a small farm. Both my parents were very observant of the wildlife they shared the farm with, but my father particularly so. He also had infinite patience with a small child. He taught me to sit quietly and watch a rabbit playing in the fence row, to recognize "good" plants in the woods and pastures, and also made it infinitely exciting, bundling me onto his shoulders to go snowshoeing during January full moons. I've stolen one of my favorite lines from him: if you take care of the land, the land will take care of you. So my childhood, and my " how soon can I get outside" view of my leisure time, and land conservation seemed to bring all my personal and professional experiences together.

I asked Lackey for a history of her tenure at Legacy and its predecessor, WLT.

Lackey: Legacy (via its predecessors) is the oldest local land conservancy in Michigan. But in 2005, we were experiencing a prolonged organizational adolescence and struggling to understand what we wanted to be as an organization. This made fundraising a constant challenge, and, frankly, it seemed like a community with as much history of environmental and conservation activism as we have deserved a more robust private nonprofit land trust effort.

Stroll through wetlands and meadows of wildflowers at Lloyd & Mabel Johnson Preserve.

Photo by Deke Ludwig



Our first task as an organization was to define what success would look like. First, we realized that our state parks (Waterloo, Pinckney, and Sharonville) and our rivers (Huron, Raisin, and Grand) provided something of a natural boundary for our work, but that it extended beyond Washtenaw County into Jackson, where no active local conservancy was engaged. This resulted in the name change and, ultimately, the definition of the "Emerald Arc" the rivers, public lands, privately held natural areas, and farmland nestled into the arc formed by those places—served as a driving force for our work.

I have gotten a lot of credit for this over the years, but in truth, if credit is going where it's due, it was the Board that started looking at maps and realized what had been in front of us all the time. There were four other things that defined those early years as well. This was in the midst of the national real estate boom, and, in some parts of the country, developers had used conservation easements to take inflated tax deductions for land they would never have been able to develop anyway. Congress threatened the entire tax structure of land trusts as a result, and our national association, Land Trust Alliance, responded with a voluntary accreditation program. We knew—or thought we knew—we did things right, but it was more out of good character than formal systems that prevented bad action. So we volunteered to be one of the pilot organizations to go through accreditation. This was expensive, time consuming, and really scary. In fact, at one point I got cold feet and began to question whether we were doing the right thing, only to discover that my staff, in anticipation of that, had sent in our preliminary application before I could change my mind! It's good to work with good people. The result of all this was that we were one of the first conservancies in the nation to be accredited and have reaccredited twice since then. The process also helped us form the detailed plans we needed to turn the idea of the Emerald Arc into a workable idea.

Conservancies do their work "forever," and that puts interesting constraints on us. Specifically, we have to have cash on hand to face any legal challenge that might arise to our projects, which place permanent restrictions on privately owned land. This can be as simple as having to confirm boundaries for a neighbor or as complex as someone deciding to build a roller rink in your protected wetland. We're supposed to have some type of endowment or legal defense fund for that work, and ours was woefully inadequate and threatened our accreditation as well as our ability to look people in the face and say, "Yup—forever."

In early 2008, the McKinley Foundation offered us a challenge grant to establish what we called our Forever Fund for that purpose. Unfortunately, early 2008 led to late 2008, and the financial crisis and we, along with other nonprofits, feared for our ability to keep our doors open, much less raise money that we hoped we'd never need to use. Fortunately, we had good board members—again—who helped us identify some assets (a cell tower on a nature preserve donated the prior year to Legacy) that could be converted to cash, which solved our operating needs and let us focus on meeting the terms of the grant. Board members and others stepped up to introduce new people to Legacy, and we met the McKinley Foundation challenge. We all took so much pride in being able to explain to landowners that this was how we could look them in the eye and say "forever" and mean it.

The final thing that defined those early years was the decision to change the name of the organization. We believed (and it's been borne out over time) that our service area would gradually expand. And we also knew that it was really difficult to get folks to think of the Washtenaw Land Trust as "their" conservancy if they lived in Jackson, Livingston, or Lenawee Counties. So we went through a process, about the same time as accreditation and filling the Forever Fund, to change the name into something that would be able to stand the test of time. That included the now famous "nest" that is Legacy's logo. It's a bluebird's nest, which describes one of America's great citizen conservation successes. From the moment we unveiled it to a fundraising dinner, people have loved that logo. It really defines what we do.

article continued on next page

Enjoy the crisp fall air at Creekshead Preserve.

Photo by Margot_Mehringer

LEGACY Land Conservancy

continued from previous page

Charity Steere, Board Member

I also corresponded with Charity Steere, longtime Legacy Board member and volunteer. Steere, 71, began serving on the Board in 2003, when Legacy was still named the Washtenaw Land Trust. At the time she was on the board of directors of Waterloo Hunt Club (WHC) and was chairman of their hunter/jumper horse shows.

Slomovits: Tell me about your work at the Waterloo Hunt Club.

Charity Steere: WHC had formed a small land conservancy with the goal of protecting some of the land they hunt over in and around the Waterloo Recreation Area (WRA), and I was a member of that conservancy board as well. When it became obvious that the Waterloo Conservancy was too small to accomplish our goals, the president of that board began searching for an organization with which to merge. WLT had recently joined forces with the Potawatomi Land Trust, and one of the expectations of that merger was that WLT would work to protect land in and around the WRA. The merger of WLT and the Waterloo Land Conservancy followed as a logical result. The Waterloo Land Conservancy was offered a seat on the WLT board at the time of the merger, and I volunteered to fill that seat, largely because I live within the WRA.

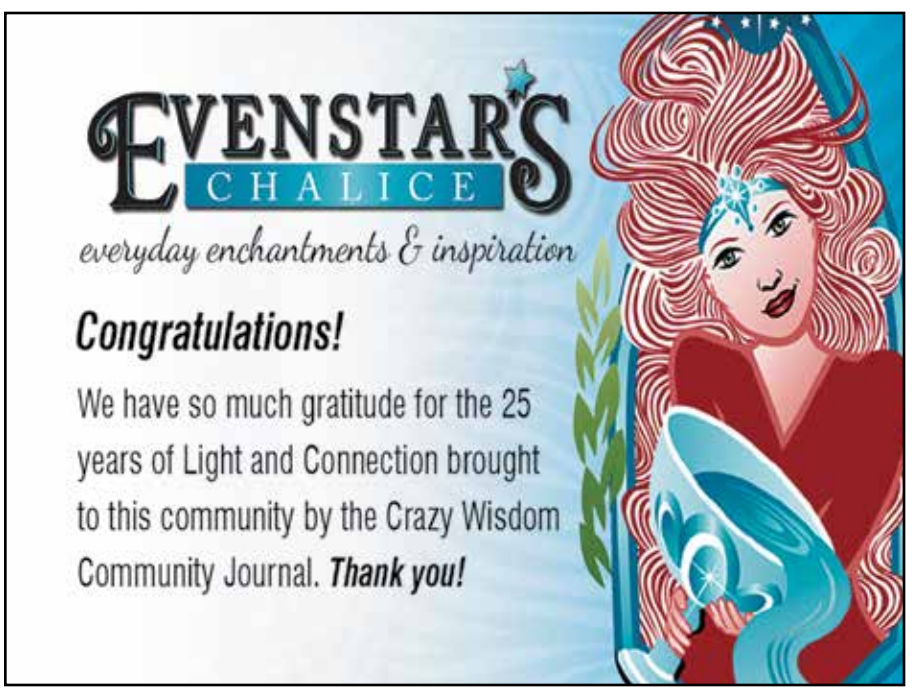
Sandor: What have been the primary issues, challenges, successes, and goals of Legacy during your tenure?

Steere: Legacy's challenges are very similar to those of any other small non-profit organization. The mission is to create more work than staff can possibly accomplish. The task is finding and retaining top-notch, dedicated staff, funding the day-to-day operations, and meeting the challenges of a growing organization, along with the community's expanding need for the service it provides. Community education and outreach about the mission is also necessary and demanding. Where the challenges Legacy faces differ from other non-profits is in the nature of the work. Every property Legacy protects adds to the workload because each additional property needs to be monitored annually—more property equals more work. Nothing especially unusual there, except that Legacy, like all other land conservancies and trusts, promises to do this in perpetuity. So every document must be written and preserved with that in mind, and, most significantly, the future monitoring and defense of those conservation agreements must have endowed funds to ensure that that commitment to perpetuity is met.

Sandor: What in your childhood and upbringing contributed to your association with Legacy?

Steere: My first brush with the consequences of development occurred when I was in first grade. Every day I walked to and from the one-room country school just down the road. When Interstate 127 was built, the construction went across our road right between our house and my school. This crushed my dream of riding a two-wheeled bicycle to school for second-grade instead of walking. As it turned out, it also closed my school. The other consequence was that it made me forever skeptical of development.

I've always lived in the country because our family has always had horses and kept them at home. Riding space has come at an increasing premium, more and more difficult to find and retain, so the opportunity to protect additional riding country in and around the Waterloo Recreation Area and to buffer that natural area from the consequences of development (like paved roads) was important to me.



Charity Steere, Legacy Land Conservancy Board Member

> This is work that matters and I'm really proud to have been a part of it.
>
> —Charity Steere

Development is necessary, and in many cases desirable, but, in my opinion, it must be appropriate to, and in consideration of, the nature of the land and its "highest and best" use.

Sandor: I've been told that besides your work on Legacy's Board, you also volunteer.

Steere: When one of Legacy's early calls for new volunteer photo-monitors went out, I rather petulantly decided that I was doing enough and didn't want to dedicate any additional time, so I refused to take the training or join a monitoring team. Besides, it would have involved learning some scary new computer skills and learning how to use a GPS unit. So when my husband and a good friend did volunteer, at first, I refused to accompany them on their monitoring visits. But when they came back raving about how much fun it was, and what cool things they were seeing, I agreed to go along on their next visit. I've joined them on every subsequent trip and love it! Seeing the wonderful properties Legacy has protected and all the plants, critters, and natural features on this land is amazing and inspiring and has really cemented my commitment to Legacy's work. But I've still avoided improvements to my computer skills or learning to use the GPS unit. Best of both worlds!

Final Words

All of the people I talked with at Legacy had some similar qualities in common: a deep love for the natural world, a shared sense of responsibility, a dedication to saving and passing along beautiful natural areas, and the desire to protect the environment. All seemed to feel a deep sense of satisfaction from working and volunteering for the Legacy Land Conservancy, and they all communicated lyrically, almost poetically, about their service to the land.

Diana Kern: We're coming up on our 50-year anniversary, and we've been involved in protecting over 9,200 acres of land so far. We have a bigger goal of 25,000 acres. Like any good non-profit, you do strategic planning, set goals and visions. This year we will be talking to partners, the community, and our donors and asking, "What's the next space that Legacy should be in? Where should we be going for the future?"

I'm really excited to do that. How are we engaged with the community on a bigger level? How are we helping with climate change, carbon sequestration, water

> We're not just a land deal nonprofit. We'd like to be at the table, helping with education and outreach. I think that's something that the community needs to know, that we want to be part of that bigger discussion and solution.
>
> —Diana Kern

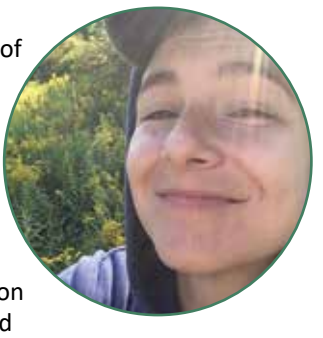
quality? What role can Legacy play in those areas, while at the same time working with all of our landowners? We're not just a land deal non-profit. We'd like to be at the table, helping with education and outreach. I think that's something that the community needs to know, that we want to be part of that bigger discussion and solution.

Scott Rosencrans: This is what we do. We're a small and humble organization, yet we keep plugging away with lofty goals. This is our thing—conserve the land, help the environment, help folks stay on the land, if that's what they want to do.

Susan Lackey: All that Legacy has done wouldn't have happened without good staff and good board members and volunteers. But the most important people in the process are the landowners. I've sat at kitchen tables with farmers who tell stories of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers homesteading the land, including one who led me out to show off the beech tree with his great grandfather's initials carved in it, along with the date, 1832. I've walked a piece of land with a woman who had purchased it because she loved the sandhill cranes who were, at that moment, grazing peacefully in the field below us. I've visited a pine forest with a family who had wonderful memories of working with their father and uncle to plant thousands of seedlings in a played-out field and seeing the fairy rings that made the entire place seem magical. I've watched a kindergartener discover how fascinating minnows can be at the edge of a pond. I heard a woman tell me how she used the inheritance from the sale of her parents' farm to buy one of her own, and how she had to fight with the seller because he kept insisting that she needed a man to advise her. And then how for the next 20 years, she worked to create better habitat for the many butterflies she discovered there. I've walked through a hunting property with the owner, who sheepishly admitted that he was doing less and less hunting and more and more sitting and watching as he increasingly got to "know" the game on his property.

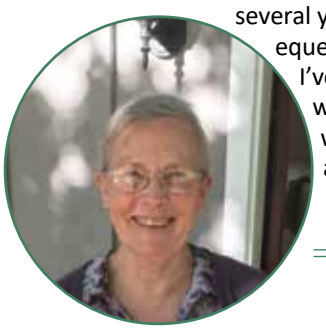
> All that Legacy has done wouldn't have happened without good staff and good board members and volunteers. But the most important people in the process are the landowners.
>
> —Susan Lackey

> There's an actual measurable impact. There are calculations that we do as part of our grant funding, we actually assign a number to different water quality metrics, what a conservation easement actually equates to in terms of water quality protection and things like that... at a time when there are so many things that are intangible, immaterial, and theoretical... definitely one of the reasons why I keep on keeping on.
>
> —Allene Smith



discouraged. I graduated [from college] during the recession. I didn't have a lot of opportunity right out of the gate professionally, so to have found this part of the conservation world... A conservation easement is something that's *real,* it feels real and tangible. There's an actual measurable impact. There are calculations that we do as part of our grant funding, we actually assign a number to different water quality metrics, what a conservation easement actually equates to in terms of water quality protection and things like that. It feels so real, it's refreshing. And at a time when there are so many things that are intangible, immaterial, and theoretical... Definitely one of the reasons why I keep on keeping on.

Charity Steere: When asked to describe myself I say "horsewoman, housewife, and gardener," even though I no longer have horses. I worked as a public librarian for several years and ran a great many horse shows and other equestrian events, but the only really significant work I've done, work that will have any lasting value, is the work I've done with Legacy Land Conservancy. This is work that *matters,* and I'm really proud to have been a part of it.



Dana Wright: I grew up in northern Michigan on the shores of an exquisitely beautiful lake surrounded by maple forests and cherry and apple orchards. In the summertime I had tropical-blue, clear waters to swim in, sprawling and wise trees to build forts in, wild strawberries, mushrooms, leeks, and orchard fruits to enjoy. In the wintertime I had snow-covered sand hills for sledding and an icy lake for skating. Being connected to the natural world on a daily basis is my heritage. A career to protect that world, and foster in other people the type of connection with nature that I was allowed to have as a child, is a path I've always enjoyed.

Allene Smith: We're not a super well-known organization, and conservation easements are not very well known, but it's really easy in this world to get

Legacy Staff Photo

Play in the stream at Beckwith Preserve.

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The Crazy Wisdom Kids Section

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Crazy Wisdom Kids

By Waldorf parent Sarah Newland

Mind Body Baby: Crystals
By Imprint
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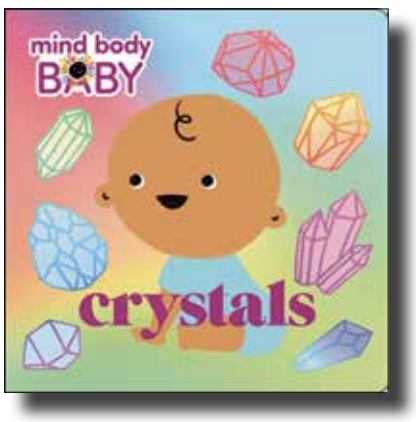

The Monkey Mind Meditation Deck
By Carolyn Kanjuro
Help children get to know their monkey minds to become more present, confident, and capable of handling difficult emotions. This vibrant deck explores the powerful qualities of animals and nature, inspiring kids to discover the same strengths in themselves. The 30 simple practices encourage authentic exploration, enriching children with the transformative power of mindfulness in a playful way.
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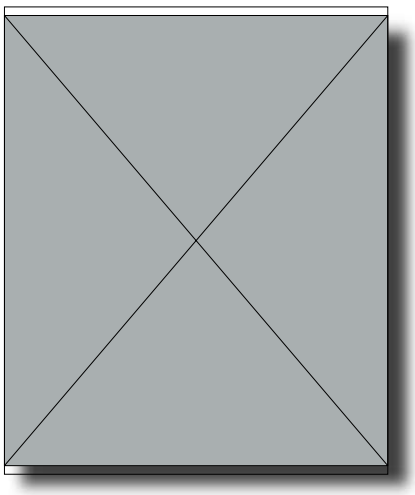

Big Breath: A Guided Meditation for Kids
By William Meyer
Calm your worries and build your bravery, or just relax during a busy day or wind down before bed. Did you know that you can play with your breath and use it to take you on an adventure? These gentle prompts and wonderful illustrations make meditation as fun as a game, but with big results.
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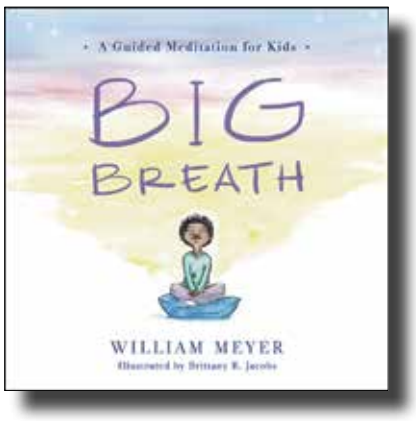

Wild Lives: 50 Extraordinary Animals that Made History
By Ben Lerwill
We often read heroic stories about fearless people. This book is a captivating collection that gathers fifty heartwarming, surprising, and emotionally powerful stories of animals from around the world who showed immense bravery, aided in groundbreaking discoveries, and displayed true friendship.
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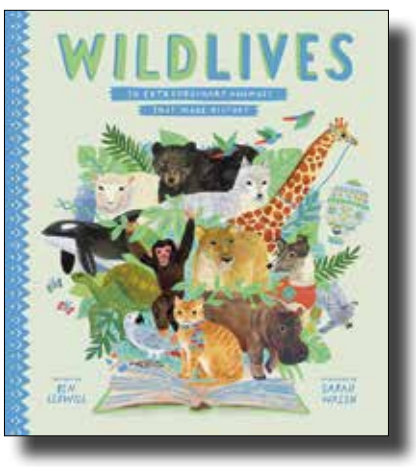

Acadia Files: Book One, Summer Science
By Katie Coppens
Acadia Greene wants answers. Who keeps stealing her blueberries just as they ripen on the bushes? Why is her hair curly? Why does the sun wake her up so early in the summer? "Conduct an experiment. Use the scientific method," her parents tell her. So Acadia does science. And so can you.
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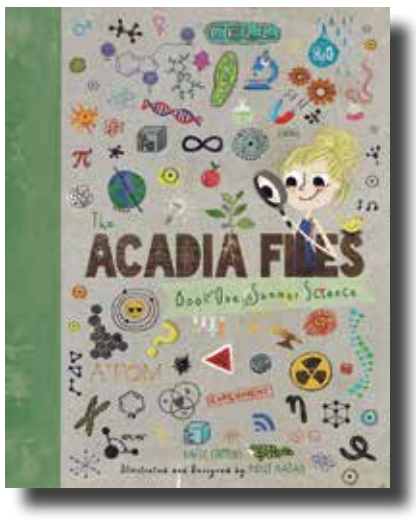

Draw, Paint, Sparkle:
Creative Projects from an Elementary Art Teacher
By Patty Palmer
Encourage and empower kids to make art! The 25 art lessons in this book present simple drawing instructions paired with a range of painting techniques and styles for endless creative exploration. Lessons include beginner projects, art lessons inspired by the masters, and paintings inspired by nature, with tips, techniques, and ideas for home-based art.
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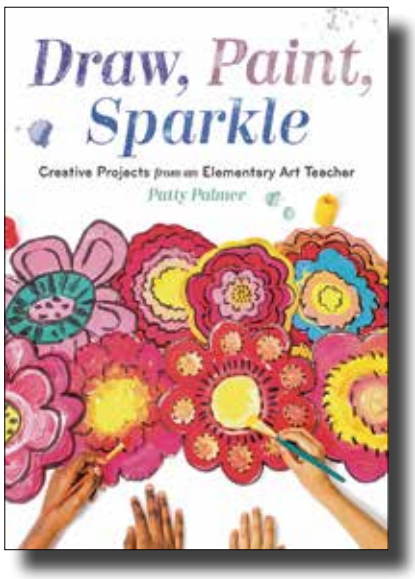

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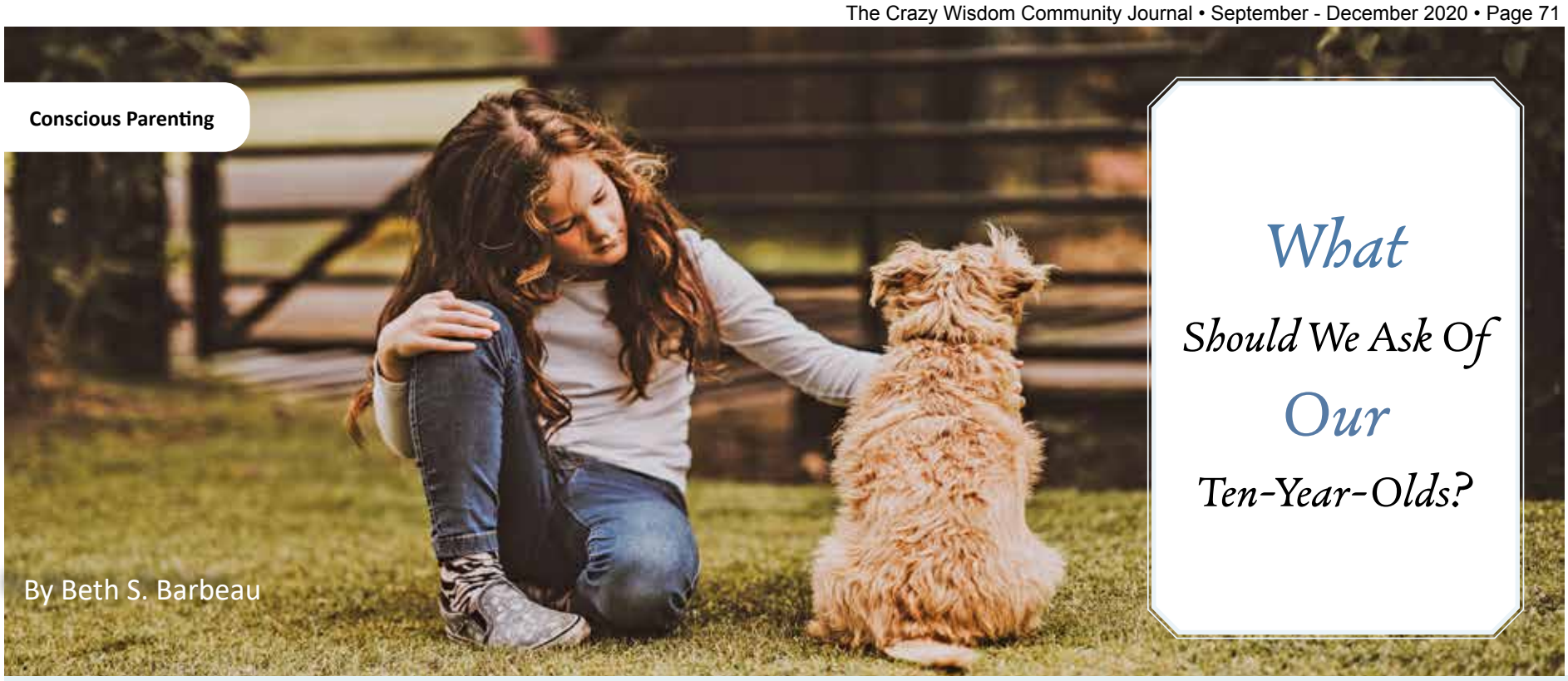
Conscious Parenting



What Should We Ask Of Our Ten-Year-Olds?

By Beth S. Barbeau

It's no secret that it's a challenging full-time job to raise our children to be capable, contributing adults, especially during a pandemic. Yet, we don't want to miss that critical middle ground to develop our children's life skills—the window between the delight of infants starting to walk and the anxiety of teens starting to drive. Since we all have much more time at home with our kids right now, it's a good time to practice these practical skills. When my own kids started to launch into their adult lives, it was suddenly and starkly apparent that the base of any competency had started years ago.

So, I recently started a conversation with parents of 10-year-olds with this question, "What life skills are your kids working on? What do you think 10-year-olds should be able to do?" Their responses varied wildly, from "I don't know if she can butter bread!" to "Sort and do their own laundry."

It's no secret that it's a challenging full-time job to raise our children to be capable, contributing adults.

One thing was apparent. Everyone agreed that it varied from kid to kid. And more skills were definitely expected from the kids in bigger, rural families. I heard things like, "We're thinking 12 years old for milking a cow." Skills tended to group around running and feeding the household, maintenance, and social development. Doing it "perfectly" was not the goal, or even expected. Parents understood their children needed time and practice to learn to take care of themselves, to feel responsible for pulling their own weight, and to experience pride in meaningful contribution.

Our children need to do important everyday work and learn from the natural consequence of their efforts. This might mean eating a burnt grilled cheese or having to clean up the mess animals made when the garbage wasn't taken out promptly.

What did parents think was *too* much? After brief consideration, we quickly agreed that expecting a 10-year-old to use a plunger in the toilet might be going too far. There was disagreement about whether they should be changing their own bedding, and nobody was satisfied with how the kids were cleaning the bathrooms, but all agree they needed to be trying. Every once in a while, one of the adults would sigh, and say "…that one, I still don't really know how to do that myself!"

A great deal of information can be transferred by our modeling, or those times we work and learn alongside our kiddos. It's in those times that we also help them develop patience and stamina, explore what doesn't work just as much as what does, and explore time management.

Our children need to do important everyday work and learn from the natural consequence of their efforts.

The development of life skills is not a one-time event, but an on-going building and teaching opportunity. All the parents reflected on the great deal of work it takes on their part to make these chores happen, and also on how frequently the outcomes are annoyingly messy and need to be re-addressed.

Yet, those with children over 18 years old were unanimous in the opinion that letting kids learn by doing, and insisting on their participation, were essential to them moving into adulthood safely and capably. And, even more, that this time arrives in a breathless blink. What skills will your child be working on this year?

Beth Barbeau, CPM, LM is a mom, homebirth midwife, and Resonance Repatterner. She is an instructor at the Naturopathic Institute of Therapies and Education in Mt. Pleasant, in the Holistic Doula program. She also consults on Natural Family Health and Maternity care in Ann Arbor.

Capable 10-year-old skills may include knowing how to:

1. Tie shoes
2. Make their bed
3. Wash dishes
4. Sweep the floor
5. Take care of a pet
6. Sort laundry
7. Fold clothes
8. Pick out their own clothes for purchase, learning prioritizing and budgeting
9. Make a sandwich
10. Reheat leftovers and eat them
11. Make brownies from a box, or from scratch, depending
12. Plan and make a simple meal
13. Load and unload the dishwasher and set the table for dinner
14. Use a knife in the kitchen safely
15. Wash their own hair in the shower
16. Clip nails and floss teeth
17. Take themselves to bed
18. Make themselves clean and presentable
19. Know how to act at Grandma's house
20. Politely interrupt a conversation
21. Respectfully disagree
22. Make a card for someone/write a thank you note
23. Understand how to hold a baby safely and nicely
24. Be a good participating spectator at a sporting event
25. Value tithing, giving, or charity, with a pathway to share and be generous
26. Occasionally be at least somewhat comfortable being quiet and in solitude
27. Know how to make something simple in textiles; knit, crochet, or sew
28. Take no for an answer and be able to say no in appropriate situations
29. Call 911, and have an idea of what to communicate
30. Play an instrument, no matter how much a beginner
31. Safely and effectively use a hammer and screwdriver
32. Negotiate reasonably
33. Make a phone call—this is a different skill in the last few years, but even many teens are terrified of making a call to someone they don't know.
34. Make some money, start to manage own money, and save money for something important
35. Have a unique role that's important to the family; in one family, their 10-year-old is relied upon for checking the dog for ticks and removing them; in another, their son prides himself on keeping the Berkey water filter filled

Crazy Wisdom Kids in the Community

Love You From My Head To-ma-toes: Ann Arbor's Immersive Farming Programs For Kids

By Laura K. Cowan

In a busy age, and now in a time that encourages outdoor activities and social distancing, how do parents help their kids get the most out of outside play time? I recently looked into starting a small cut flower farm on land next to our home. It's an amazing opportunity to expand my daughter's knowledge—from watering plants around the house to a full-scale growing operation. This plan may take a few years, if we ever get through the experimental stage, but it got me thinking about how modern parents can get their kids involved in gardening if they don't have a lot of space in their yard or schedule. Now that Covid is in the picture, we also wanted to check in with local educational and farming programs to find out what is still scheduled for kids.

Turns out, there are tons of programs around Ann Arbor and the outlying areas for immersing your kids in the farm-to-table movement, gardening, or learning about nutrition.

Turns out, there are tons of programs around Ann Arbor and the outlying areas for immersing your kids in the farm-to-table movement, gardening, or learning about nutrition. When I reached out to local farmers and mamas for more suggestions, I was flooded with response. I heard not just about the Washtenaw Food Hub co-owner Deb Lentz's farm named Tantre in Chelsea, Growing Hope in Ypsi, and Green Apple Playschool—all of which we visited—but the farm at St. Joe's, Willow Run Acres, Radiance Organic Farms, Pittsfield Township farm and summer camp, and numerous public school gardens and programs. This rainbow of garden programs are incredible chances to bond with your kid in nature or over whole foods. Even better, these programs are all over town, so there is sure to be one near your neighborhood whether it's summer, spring, or fall harvest season.

I spoke with a few founders of kids farming programs to get a sense of the variety of activities on offer and hear their stories. Every single one of these people spoke fondly of the importance of gardening as a culture and of the joy of the immersive experience, and I'm happy to share what they're doing with you before this fall harvest season is over. Ann Arbor and the surrounding greenbelt is an awesome place to get your kids interested in gardening or farming.

Pizza & Multicolor Popcorn at Tantre Farm

Deb Lentz, and her husband Richard Andres, own Tantre Farm, an organic farm in Chelsea, as well as the Washtenaw Food Hub just north of Ann Arbor on Whitmore Lake Road. Not only is Tantre Farm helping feed the community, but they offer programs that teach kids gardening and farming skills.

"We do a number of kid-friendly activities at Tantre Farm," Lentz said. "During the summer we have had monthly family farm hikes, kids cooking classes, our annual

[Lentz] believes that farming isn't only growing food—it's connecting with the land and becoming a part of a community and a culture.

Lentz is brimming with stories of families who are a part of the extended Tantre Farm family.

Kid Farm Day in August, a kids garden at the farm, and lots of kid-friendly activities during the CSA seasons—from u-pick opportunities to bubble making to swinging on giant tree swings to collecting eggs from the ducks and chickens." Lentz said she loves having parents and kids come out to the farm for extended days in the summer, to immerse themselves in the environment of the farm. She believes that farming isn't only growing food—it's connecting with the land and becoming a part of a community and a culture.

Tantre Farms hosts educational field trips for school groups and gives edible farm tours for all kinds of children's organizations throughout the summer, fall, and spring.

"It's great to let people know there are healthy options out there for activities," Lentz told us.

Why Tantre? What keeps kids in an outlying area full of farm space coming back to a CSA to hang out when there is so much rural space in Chelsea? Lentz explained:

> I'm a teacher of 16 years. My daughter was born, and we started the CSA program. We wanted to connect to the community, and that was still going to involve communication [and education]. I had done some gardening, so the first step was to create a kid's garden that's very small and manageable for children. They come on our first spring open house in May on a Sunday and we organize three of those — one in spring, a summer one in July, and a fall one in September . I n May kids can plant something in the kid's garden. I have seeds set out, and a couple rules such as you have to plant in a row. Kids put their name on a stick and get to label what the plant is [that they planted]. If their family's CSA pickup is at the farm, they come every week and get to water the plant and let it grow. They might also help weed. One of the greatest pleasures for me is watching those kids get excited as changes happen in the garden.

Lentz said this way, kids see firsthand how amazing it is to watch a plant grow from seed and change through the season until harvest time:

> This one little girl would check [her plant] every week and water. She would drag her dad over and have a certain order and routine. She planted popcorn, [so she was] watching that emerge from the soil, watering it, watching what a cob looks like. When a cob appears it's not ready to be picked until it turns brown, so she watched it through harvesting in September. I always have kids plant a multi-colored popping corn so it's fun for kids to open the cob…. I give them hints on how to let it dry a little longer .

> There was this one little boy who was maybe two when he first started coming to the farm. In the beginning his mom was a grad student at the University of Michigan, now she's a professor and has a second child. The nanny still brings the boys to the farm and decided to make a tradition of documenting , through photos and videos, the children's adventures from the kid garden to the swings and bubbles to the slide to the cats and dogs and ducks and chickens. It was something the mom came back the next year and talked about—how the stories helped them through the winter waiting for the next year.

Lentz is brimming with stories of families who are a part of the extended Tantre Farm family. She said the farm hosts pizza parties where they make pizza from scratch in their brick ovens. Everyone from farm hands to families in the CSA are invited. "There is one family with a single mom who brings her daughter even in winter," Lentz said. "She used to work on the farm and continues to come on Fridays [for pizza]. Our visitors become part of our lives, and it's fun to see how this experience has become an important part of their children's development."

Agrarian Adventure hosts a harvest brunch in February so kids can come with their families and learn about the program through a fundraiser.

One mother and daughter came to the farm for years as the little girl grew up. The girl is now 12 years-old, but "for all those years they would come and stay all day. Pack a lunch, nap in the hammock on the farm, walk around and investigate the swamp, tromp through the mushroom forest. They had a sand area where they played and made fairy houses in the woods. They really immersed themselves in the farm. They still come on Fridays," Lentz told us, "for pizza night."

So how do parents who struggle to find time to come out to the farm get involved?

"I'm also a board member of the Agrarian Adventure," Lentz said. "It's an organization that partners with K-12 schools to enrich students' connection between the foods they eat, their personal health, and the health of their communities and the environment. Agrarian Adventure runs a program called Farmer in the Classroom and supports school gardens in the Ann Arbor area." Many of the parents we talked to about farming programs agreed that their school garden was a favorite way their kids connected with gardening.

Programming is a bit up in the air right now, and school field trips are uncertain for the fall with local schools not yet announcing opening plans, but outdoor family hikes are still on the schedule at Tantre Farm, and they have switched their "Plant Walks" to learn about plant varieties to Zoom for now.

Lentz told us another story:

> One o f [the] parents [who works with Tantre Farm] works in the garden school program at Burns Park. She actually started as a totally new person to local food and eating things you cook from scratch. She started working with the kid's garden and loved to dig in the dirt so she would weed and water…. Now she helps with the program. [We do] edible farm walks and come back to do a sit-down arts and crafts nature activity…. She took some of these ideas and started her own after-school activities. It started here [at Tantre Farm] and moved to Burns Park as outreach, and now those activities can move into birthday parties. The education moves to a new place beyond its source.

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Most years, Agrarian Adventure hosts a harvest brunch in February so kids can come with their families and learn about the program through a fundraiser. Families come eat a meal made from the food that is locally grown. "Organizations should know there are edible farm tours," Lentz said. "That has really spring boarded into other things where people say, 'Can I have a birthday party at your farm?' We help with the resources we have, and that just happened because somebody asked."

Some local farms have announced ways of socially distancing U-pick operations or staggering times when people visit for CSA pickups. Make sure you check with each farm before visiting so you know what the current arrangements are.

More than anything, Lentz sees farming as family, so including children in the growing and harvesting is only natural:

> It is such an enriching experience for people to make the effort to bring families to farms in the area that are open to that, not just ours. Many farms believe very much in trying to have our community really have a hands-on experience to understand that food is not just about tasting—but smelling, touching, listening to the sounds of nature, and exploring. It's a very full body experience to be that in touch with the food we put into our bodies.

Lentz said she loves supporting farming programs in schools. "Our whole body is a part of learning how to be a healthier person," she said. It's a culture:

> It is about encouraging people to immerse themselves in the culture of food. It's so much more than putting a piece of food in your mouth. You start making healthier decisions not because someone tells you what to do, but because it's about becoming connected to the land and the face of the land that is a person you had a positive experience with.

Continued on page 74

Crazy Wisdom Kids in the Community

Continued from page 73

And there's so much delight in the discovery: "You learn that carrots can be yellow or red or purple," Lentz said. "A bean can start purple and when you cook it, it turns green. It's like magic! It makes eating food so much more of an immersive experience, and you appreciate and preserve it more with the ultimate hope that we can put more trees and plants in our environment."

You can learn more about Tantre Farm and connect with programs on their website tantrefarm.com. More information on Agrarian Adventure can be found at agrarianadventure.org.

Kids can visit Growing Hope and see a working farm in action, right in the middle of the city.

Growing Hope In Ypsilanti

Cassandra Van Dam is the Youth & Schools Manager for Growing Hope, a program that runs a community farm in the heart of Ypsilanti. Kids can visit Growing Hope and see a working farm in action, right in the middle of the city.

Van Dam explained the basics of the program:

> We are a nonprofit in Ypsilanti, started in 2003, and when we started, we focused on working with school gardens. Since then we've evolved to address inequity in the food system. We help fund and manage two farmers markets in Ypsi, we have an incubator kitchen to help start businesses, and we have resources for people to start gardens at home. We look at the whole system with a focus on being locally driven.

If kids are taking a tour of the farm, they see Growing Hope's efforts toward sustainability, which include permeable pavements, compost, and rainwater collection systems.

Growing Hope has several programs for kids. "We have field trips at our urban farm in the center of Ypsilanti where youth groups can come get a tour, explore our hoop houses, learn about farming, and get a nutrition lesson," Van Dam said. "We also have field trips at our farmers markets."

If kids are taking a tour of the farm, they see Growing Hope's efforts toward sustainability, which include permeable pavements, compost, and rainwater collection systems.

"And when we go into the hoop houses," Van Dam said, "we talk about season extension and how hoop houses work, and the science behind it. Kids can harvest veggies, and we'll take them over to the picnic tables and either do a nutrition lesson around eating the rainbow in fruits and vegetables or make a smoothie with our smoothie bike."

You read that right. A smoothie bike. Van Dam said Growing Hope also has an adobe pizza oven. "If they really want to get into it, we can make pizza from scratch, which we do with older kids because it takes a while," she said.

This summer a new program called Pop Kids also came to the Ypsi farmers' market. For eight weeks kids could participate in a nutrition activity and get $2 to spend on produce.

People's favorite thing when coming to the urban farm is "seeing a beautiful green space in the middle of the city. The farm is tucked behind our farmhouse," Van Dam said, "so people walk by every day and don't see that it's there. Being able to be on a farm in the middle of the city is a really powerful experience. Being able to touch and see plants grow is fun for the kids."

Growing Hope has started several other programs as well:

> Beyond our field trips we also have after-school programs at certain schools in Ypsilanti. We offer after-school gardening and cooking lessons, and we have a teen program over the summer, where we employ up to 10 teens to work on our farm for 20 hours a week. They learn about farming, selling produce, food justice, and how to teach younger kids about gardening. Applications for those spots open in April.

This summer a new program called Pop Kids also came to the Ypsi farmers' market. For eight weeks kids could participate in a nutrition activity and get $2 to spend on produce. It's totally free.

Van Dam says that during coronavirus, some things have changed, but a lot of the programming is flexible:

> We will still be running some of our programs. Our after-school teen program will most likely continue, although the majority of it will be outside and teens will have to social distance and wear masks. Our after-school programs at the middle school will most likely be cancelled since school programming is up in the air. We were working with Bright Futures in the spring to provide educational materials in produce boxes to students.

For more information about connecting with Growing Hope programs, including volunteer opportunities for older kids and adults, visit their website at growinghope.net.

The houses are a little small and cramped, but the gardens around the Green Apple Playschools are big, and that's because kids here are encouraged to get outside and play in the dirt as if they were at home

Gardening with Green Apple Playschool

Diana Hensley runs the "lower school," the western location of Green Apple Playschool, which is located in two separate houses on either end of Miller Avenue in Ann Arbor. Both locations focus on teaching children from a play-based curriculum, and both also have a gardening program. The houses are a little small and cramped, but the gardens around the Green Apple Playschools are big, and that's because kids here are encouraged to get outside and play in the dirt as if they were at home. The location at the base of Miller near downtown has a greenhouse outside and a play yard. The other location next to Miller and M-14 in west Ann Arbor has an entire back yard filled with raised bed gardens.

Hensley told us about the play-based curriculum: "The children are the curriculum," she said. "We believe in creating a home-like environment."

Playschool apprentice teacher, Joel Whitehead, said kids take more risks here than some people are comfortable with, similar to Montessori practical living skills. Kids splash through big puddles in the back yard during our visit, and inside they play on a built-in indoor treehouse or nap in cribs. Children are watched by one caregiver to every four children in the lower school (birth to age three), and one for every eight in the upper, which was a busy place during our visit with coats zipping and boot tying for outdoor play time.

During shutdown, the school focused on remote learning, and then reopened with extra cleaning and at a lower capacity. Director Etta Heisler says it has been a challenge, but that the staff stayed busy: "Our teachers completed over 360 hours of professional development and delivered over 140 recorded activities, 80 class sessions, and two day-long special events (Mud Day and Fiesta de la Familia) to our school community," she said.

Hensley took us for a tour before the shutdown: "Our oldest room is called the sprouts room. It's very simple. You won't see a lot of plastics in our school," Hensley said of the wood furniture and play structure that lined a full wall. "This structure is unique. It's a treehouse and we allow four kids to go up there at a time and it's a lot of fun."

All snacks, vegan, come from Argus Farms, and often contain a seasonal vegetable and a whole grain, and parents bring the child's lunch from home.

The infant room is dark for napping in cribs, watched over by one of the workers, and two other side rooms are a classroom and a toddler room where kids move from two naps a day to one. That room leads out to the back yard.

Jordan told us that Green Apple also runs a program off-site for older kids that gets them out in nature. The Kids in the Woods program sponsors an after-school program at Thurston Elementary for 10-12 kids from grades K-5. "We take them out to the woods after school, and each week we have different badges—like a compass badge, poison ivy, explorer, tree identification, and finding different leaves. It's nice to take a break from the little ones and hang out with some eight-year-olds," he said. It's a program you can sign up for through the Ann Arbor Public Schools after-school programs.

In the garage is an art studio, where kids can do various projects from painting to chalk. "It's often open to the outside," Hensley said, when the weather is nice. While we were there, toddlers splashed through icy puddles, though all bundled up for the activity in water-proof boots and snowsuits. Hensley explained the relaxed home-like mentality of Green Apple:

> The philosophy we have here creates a relaxed environment so children are not stressed. We have part-time and full-time schedules. We are a Reggio Emilia-inspired school. That's an [educational philosophy that came out of a] city in Italy. They have a lot of theories about how children grow.

Back in WWII the town of Villa Cella in the region of Reggio Romana was in devastation. "They had to come up with a plan to revitalize their city and knew children were the future, so they rebuilt the schools," said Hensley.

"Children are born to have 100 languages," Hensley quoted from a book by early Reggio Emilia pedagogical leader Loris Malaguzzi, who saw the schools being rebuilt and was so impressed he stayed to help. "Society takes 99 of them and tells them no, you need to do this, and you need to do this to be a perfect human."

In Reggio Emilia they believe children are beautiful and need to be surrounded by beautiful things and raised in a home-like environment. "That is our curriculum," Hensley explained. "Our curriculum comes from whatever interests the child has. So, if children want to stomp in puddles we stomp in puddles. We may dig deeper into water play and pull books in on stomping in puddles, we may sing songs. Whatever the interests of the child are, we scaffold that. It isn't a boxed curriculum."

Children at Green Apple are given watering cans and miniature rakes to help learn how to plant and grow tomatoes. "Whatever we grow, that comes inside and becomes our snacks," Hensley said. It's just a part of the playschool day here, not the full focus, but it does seem to engage the children in a home-like schedule where they help the adults with tasks around the garden and play in the living room like you would find in a family home.

Etta Heisler says Green Apple is dedicated to serving their learning community throughout the ups and downs of schools being closed to keep kids safe: "With the support of county health officials, incredible parent and family volunteers, we are doing our best to weather this storm."

You can learn more about Green Apple Playschools at greenapplegarden.org.

So Much Growing, So Little Time

Where is a busy parent to begin? Despite the generous support I received from moms and friends putting this article together, it was still a little tricky to identify farming programs in my area online, since so many programs fly under the radar and are word of mouth until you know the program or farm name. One pattern I noticed, however, was that many farms with programs for kids were either connected to the Ann Arbor public school or Rec & Ed system (a2schools.org/reced), and private farms often run family CSAs with more informal kids' programs or summer camps alongside. If you're interested in farming programs for kids, from summer camps to CSAs, I recommend… asking a mom. Why do I write this column again? Ann Arbor moms are a Borg collective of wisdom that far exceeds our individual capacity. Or ask a farmer at the farmer's market or in your neck of the woods. It never hurts to have a farmer for a friend, or a kid immersed in the bounty of what she grew and tended all by herself.

Laura K. Cowan is a columnist and editor for Crazy Wisdom Community Journal, the co-founder and executive editor of Cronicle Press Tech News (cronicle.press) out of Ann Arbor, and a contributing writer to The Ann Arbor Observer and Reiki News Magazine.

If you'd like to be considered for inclusion in the next Crazy Wisdom Kids column, please contact our columnist at cwkidscolumn@crazywisdom.net. The deadline for submissions for the January through April 2021 issue is November 2, 2020.

GREEN LIVING

More Than the Three R's: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle... Rot

By Alaina Lightfoot

When thinking about ways to be more sustainable, recycling is often the first option that comes to mind. Sustainability is often presented to us in the neat and tidy rule of three: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. However, recycling should actually be viewed more as a last-ditch effort since most materials can only be recycled a few times before hitting the landfill. Instead, the focus needs to be centered around the Five R's: Refuse unsustainable products, Reduce the amount of resources you consume, Reuse or repurpose what you can, and Recycle anything possible before jumping directly to your trash can as the easiest method of disposal.

Yet, what about things like food scraps? Body hair? Nail clippings? Certainly, at first glance, these aren't things we would think to do anything with other than depositing them promptly in the garbage can. After all, they're natural, they'll decompose in the landfill, right?

As it turns out, this is where the fifth and arguably most important R comes into play—Rot.

As it turns out, this is where the fifth and arguably most important R comes into play—Rot.

I can remember growing up in the country where compost piles were commonplace. People where I grew up thought nothing of walking out back after dinner and scraping plates into a large pile of compost in the back yard, dumping their bowls of meal prep scraps there at the end of the day, or sending old Halloween pumpkins to their final resting place in the mighty compost pile. When I grew up and moved to the city, I remembered feeling a little lost and shell shocked, especially as I started on my sustainability journey. It seemed like a large part of the waste I was personally producing was directly compostable. What's worse, without composting things like the scraps from my dinner, according to the EPA, I was joining the rest of America in throwing away the nearly 1.3 pounds of organic waste per person we are disposing of daily. This figure means that annually, 24% of our waste as a nation is comprised of organic, compostable materials.

In landfills, organic material is so covered that it is preserved rather than properly broken down.

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In landfills, organic material is so covered that it is preserved rather than properly broken down. Trying to rot without enough oxygen means that our organic materials in landfills are creating methane gas as they decompose. In landfills, this natural process of decomposition that should take a few weeks at most takes decades. I knew in order to do right by the planet and do my part in helping to reduce the negative effects methane gas has on climate change, I needed to start composting again. The question was how? I wasn't in the country where I could just have a massive compost pile in the backyard. I was in a high-rise apartment.

The good news is, if you're interested in doing your part to redirect your compostable waste, I've done the research so you don't have to! I've compiled a few tips that can help you get started with your composting journey, wherever you are.

City Dwellers (Especially for Our Friends in Ann Arbor)
For those of you that are in a home in Ann Arbor, the good news is the city has made composting about as easy as it can be. The city of Ann Arbor's website has detailed everything you need to know about curbside composting including:

- What you can and cannot include in your curbside composting bin
- The composting pickup schedule
- Where and how to obtain a composting bin if you don't have one currently
- Helpful tips and tricks for composting.

Visit a2gov.org/departments/trash-recycling/Pages/Compost.aspx for more composting tips from the city of Ann Arbor.

If you're in a home and you're not local to the area, you may want to look up your city's composting program. If they don't have one and a backyard pile isn't an option for you, you may want to look at some of the tips and tricks I've left down below for our friends in apartments or dorm room set-ups.

Country Friends
If you're out in the country, you have the advantage of composting the way my family did when I was young. As with anything, it's a good idea to double check for any local laws in your area around open air composting. Starting a compost pile in the backyard can be a little tough at first, but there are lots of great resources available online. Here are a few starter tips for creating your own backyard compost pile.

- Use a mix of green and brown material
  - Green are things like food scraps and green yard waste materials such as lawn clippings and weeds
  - Brown could be anything from torn up toilet paper rolls to brown yard waste like twigs and small branches
- The University of Illinois recommends a small compost pile of 3 feet cubed by 5 feet cubed in order to allow the pile to properly generate the heat and moisture needed to break down organic material without cutting off the all-important ingredient of oxygen.
- Turn your pile (using a rake or other gardening tool to pull the warm center of the compost pile toward the outside) every few weeks. According to the University of Illinois, the more frequently you turn the pile, the faster material will break down. However, think in terms of weeks, not days, you don't want to over-turn your pile.

Starting an outdoor compost pile can take a little more research than other methods, but hopefully with these tips and tricks you'll be well on your way.

Composting can be a great way to get rid of a lot of organic materials waste in your home that you may have not realized can be broken down naturally.

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Small Spaces

If you're in a small space, whether that's an apartment or a dorm room, then you're right where I was when I wanted to ramp up my sustainability efforts in a big way. However, composting when you don't have a curbside option or a backyard compost pile to fall back on can be tough. So, here are a few options that may help if you're in a small space.

- Freeze your compost—This is a tip I picked up from Lauren Singer, founder of the Package Free Shop, who keeps her compost in a stainless-steel bowl in her freezer every week and then takes it to her local farmer's market to have it composted. I would recommend a reusable airtight container, but this can be one option if you have, say, a friend or family member with a compost pile you could take your scraps to. I used to utilize this method and take my scraps to a local community garden with a compost pile. It may take a little digging to find somewhere with a compost pile you can take your scraps.
-
- Try a worm or vermicompost bin—This really depends on if you have a good place to put it, but you can get these more compact self-contained bins lots of places. These use live worms to help with an indoor decomposition process. This has the added benefit of producing a liquid called "worm tea" which you definitely won't want to drink, but your house plants just might!

Like our lifestyles, composting comes with a million different variables and it helps to do a little research on your unique situation before taking up the composting mantle. If you don't personally have a use for your compost soil once your materials have had time to decompose, see if there are local farmers or gardening associations that may want the compost soil your pile is producing.

Composting can be a great way to get rid of a lot of organic materials waste in your home that you may have not realized can be broken down naturally. Depending on how you compost, there are certain things you may want to omit from your compost pile or that your city may not accept in curbside bins. Most toilet paper and paper towel rolls work great if they've been shredded, beard and nail clippings (or the hair when you clean out your hairbrush), many household items made from 100% cotton such as cotton balls, pencil shavings, and even the crumbs from your counters and floors can all go in your compost pile. A quick internet search can usually clear up if something is compostable or not, but a good rule of thumb is that if it is a 100% natural, organic product, it will break down in the compost.

Like our lifestyles, composting comes with a million different variables and it helps to do a little research on your unique situation before taking up the composting mantle.

Like our lifestyles, composting comes with a million different variables and it helps to do a little research on your unique situation before taking up the composting mantle.

Regardless of how you do it, composting is a worthy endeavor to help create a more sustainable lifecycle for the organic material waste we all produce daily. I hope these tips have been helpful as you look into your own composting journey.

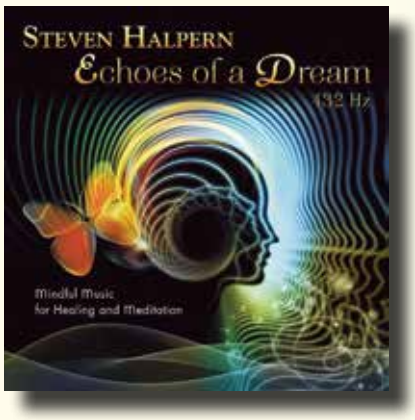
Alaina Lightfoot is a freelance writer with a passion for making sustainable living simple and accessible. Her work has previously appeared in The Crazy Wisdom Journal's *Winter 2020 issue. Alaina also recently published her first book,* Namely Art and Love*. She is local to Toledo, Ohio, but loves taking frequent trips with her husband and their dog to Ann Arbor to explore.*

Music Reviews

By Sarah Newland

Peace Through Music: 40th Anniversary Collection cd
By Dean Evenson and Soundings Ensemble
In 1979, when Dean Evenson added birdsong to his wife's peaceful flute and harp music, he had no idea he was starting a new genre of music. Over the years, they collaborated with outstanding musicians and their Peace Through Music mission spread around the world. This album draws from some of the best tracks of their award-winning music from the past four decades.
$14.98

Lost Souls cd
By Loreena McKennitt
I'm so excited to have a new Loreena McKennitt cd in the store! This is a collection of songs from over the years that had not yet found their way on any of her other albums. Some have no direct connection to her pursuit of the history of the Celts, but are still in her lovely style.
$16.98



Echoes of a Dream cd
By Steven Halpern
This mindful music for healing and meditation expands upon Halpern's healing touch with uplifting melodies, ambient atmospheres, and detailed production. Each song acts as a portal to instant relaxation, mindfulness, and inner peace. Includes collaborations with angelic vocals, cello, piano, bamboo flute, electric bass, and keyboards.
$14.98

Spring Showers cd
By Sounds of the Earth
It's the season of life, of new leaves and flowers blooming, growth and pastures of green. Birds are chirping while lovely showers of rain slowly wash away the winter's cold. This cd offers the pure wild and fragile sounds of nature; no voices or music are added.
$11.98

Drum Cargo: Rhythms of Water cd
By David and Steve Gordon
Feel the pure energy and power of water with these living liquid rhythms from around the world. Flowing drum beats combine with the sacred sound of Native American flute. Allow your body and spirit to move with this engaging shamanic drumming cd.
$15.98

These CDs are available for purchase at Crazy Wisdom!

Congratulations!
This certainly is an achievement worth celebrating!
I have always admired your dedication to promoting
the healing arts and practitioners in our area.
May you continue to be an inspiration to the entire community.
With great fondness, Cindy Klement

cindyklement.com
734.975.2444
cklement@emich.edu

CONGRATULATIONS
to our dear and longtime friends
on 25 amazing years of community service!

Thank you for shining a light on the many doorways to wellness of body, heart, mind and spirit. Your enthusiasm is a fortunate blessing for us all. May your generosity continue another 25 years & more!

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NIA SPONGBERG
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Cheers to the team at Crazy Wisdom Community Journal on your 25th anniversary! I'm grateful for the gifts of your craft and publication. Warmly, Nia

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Psychic Shields – Protecting Yourself from Negative Energies

By Moira Payne

The moon hid behind clouds in the night sky, as I stumbled my way through fresh snow headed for the barn. Even using my cell phone as a flashlight, I was barely able to see two steps in front of me. Crossing the threshold in the dark, I could sense the mold and mustiness that clung to the wooden structure, which appeared quite new. I reminded myself to even my breathing, while searching for a light switch, which I finally found behind the door.

I stood for some time, listening to the wind, feeling the unease.

A single bulb barely illuminated the space, a workshop of some kind with a couch, countertops, and a lot of tools. I had been informed that this is where strange activity took place, where rocks had been thrown against the wall by unseen forces. I stood for some time, listening to the wind, feeling the unease. I proceeded to explore by the light of my phone, opening doors and walking through additional rooms. At times, I felt hands brushing against my arms and whispers in my ear. My sense was that whatever was there was not happy about a trespasser. The home's owner insisted that the house was built in the past 50 years, but the spirit I experienced here—a male, a farmer, perhaps—lived many generations before.

I touched the pentacle that hung from a chain around my neck. My protection.

As I walked toward the furthest room, the floor seemed to become uneven under my feet. I was no longer walking on the same floor, but was now walking along a slate pathway, which then gave way to dirt. Indeed, the current structure had been built over something else.

I returned to the main house to meet my friends, who were not comfortable staying on the property any longer. 'How could you have gone into that dark barn by yourself?', they asked. I am protected, I responded.

The "knowing" is called clairsentience, or clear sensing. It is the ability to take the energy that you feel and make sense of it.

The "knowing" is called clairsentience, or clear sensing. It is the ability to take the energy that you feel and make sense of it. At times, images come to mind, words are heard in the inner part of my ear. In order to get a clear message, I have to clear my mind, empty it using meditation techniques, and sit in that space for a few moments.

In the beginning I would practice by writing down my sensations, but I quickly learned it was much better when I collected the sensations before attempting to write. After having my sense of knowing confirmed so many times, I learned how to discern between the machinations of my imagination and when I am truly sensing something.

Like me, to further develop this ability, you need to confirm what you are sensing by reaching out to others. But it's a conversation that may require careful consideration. For instance, if I am asked, I will give my impressions of someone's home. I do not believe in offering unsolicited feedback, as not all people believe or even want to know all that has transpired. And just as the psychic seeks protection in whichever way is most comforting, so too should the person who is not interested in developing her innate abilities.

So, before springing some past atrocity on a friend, or cautioning your co-worker about an impending disaster, make sure everyone is open to hearing this information! I also check myself before saying anything, by asking myself if I am speaking to be helpful or trying to impress someone. Working in the spiritual world should not be complicated by the ego of the physical world.

Working in the spiritual world should not be complicated by the ego of the physical world.

Those of us who consider ourselves healers are a beacon for energy from this world and beyond. With this gift comes a greater need for protection. Psychic protection is akin to hand washing—it has to be done. The more often we protect ourselves, the easier it becomes for us to do automatically.

I have been teaching my son how to protect himself since he was a young child. I would tell him to stand still and imagine his feet are roots, like the roots of a tree that go into the ground, deep into the earth. His roots would find a ball of energy that was pure love, anchored to the center of the earth. As they touched that ball of energy, the love would move up his roots and into his feet, traveling up his body, filling every limb until it filled his head and poured out the top. That love would then come out of his crown and spread around him, creating a shield.

The "shielding game" became almost a guided meditation for him and he experiences comfort simply by working through the exercise. He is now an adult and recently shared with me that he still does this exercise.

Shielding is one of the most common forms of psychic protection within the energy worker community. Another technique is to imagine being enveloped by an egg, covered in a mirrored shell, which deflects everything. The egg surrounds you from top to bottom, above, below, and all the way around. The shield may conform to your body, or it can extend outward, far beyond arm's reach. Whenever you need, you can feel safe within your shield.

The "shielding game" became almost a guided meditation for him and he experiences comfort simply by working through the exercise.

The outside of your shield can be created to suit what you need to protect yourself from. I rely on a clear shield, one that would protect me, but that I can still feel what is happening on the outside. I imagine a black obsidian shield when I feel "attacked" in any way. I love the feeling of filling my shield with pure love. At times, I use just the love with no hard barriers as my shield. You can experiment using different shields without telling anyone that you are shielding and compare your results. Some use shields that are like nets, catching all that is not for our highest good and keeping it on the outside.

I am frequently asked how to protect homes. A very simple, but deliberate, way to create protective forces in your home is to make altars. Honor the spirits of the house, your ancestors, or even your deities. Pictures, statues, crystals, candles, letters—or other things that call what you are honoring to mind. I have created a shield for my entire home, surrounding it all the way around and above and below. I place objects of protection throughout my home.

Many people work with angels, but before relying on angelic protection, you must develop a relationship with that angel. Respect your chosen protector by doing research, talking to them, and listening to their messages. The same goes for any deities and spirit guides. Reverence and respect go a long way.

If you have your angel on your altar, ask that angel to protect you. Leaving a piece of jewelry, stones, a bag of herbs, or even your car keys on the altar overnight, will help to carry as protection with you when you awake in the morning.

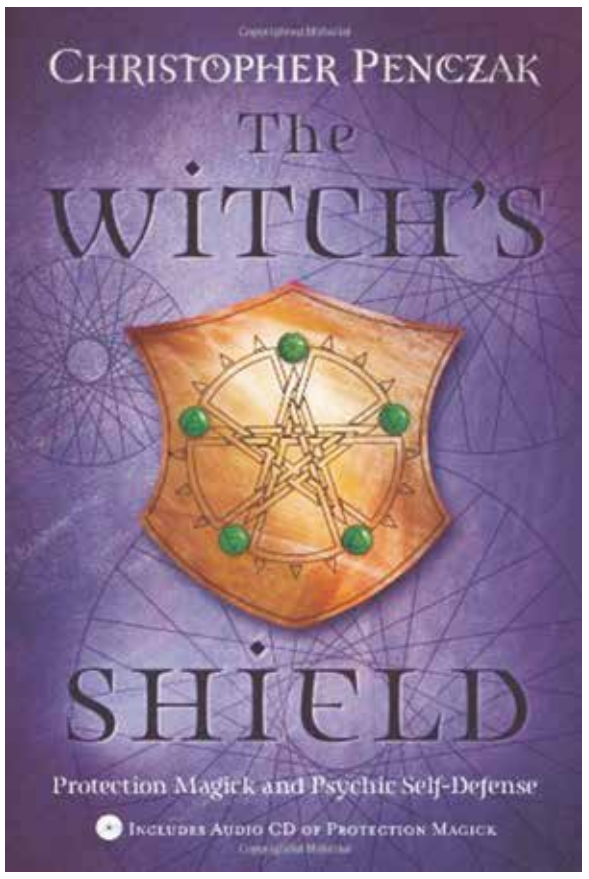
Our minds are containers that collect all sorts of thoughts and energies. We are inundated with violence on television, scary movies, and the simple cruelty of the world. I do my best to minimize the negative input from the outside by not watching scary movies, not reading shock news stories, and not allowing myself to imagine the "worst case scenarios" when thinking about my loved ones. I will stop people from speaking aloud their fears and instead ask them to speak their hopes. I have found that common sense is the best form of protection of any kind.

Many people wear a symbol around their neck, such as a Cross, Pentacle, Star of David, angel, deity, or crystal. If you wear a necklace, I would encourage you to "charge" the necklace with protection. You can charge it by holding it in your hand, and imagining a divine cord coming from above and funneling into your necklace. Imagine the force of protection entering into the center of the pendant and filling it up. You can then feel the necklace radiating out love, peace, and protection.

I will stop people from speaking aloud their fears and instead ask them to speak their hopes… Prayers, mantras, affirmations, and even laughter are good forms of common protection

Prayers, mantras, affirmations, and even laughter are good forms of common protection. People call on their deities, angels, and guardians for help, which I also view as effective, as long as we have a relationship with them first. I love the use of laughter for protection, as it breaks up energy with sounds of joy. There are many things that we do naturally, but when we become aware of the protection element, they become more powerful.

Most of the time, the things we need psychic protection from are actual people in our lives. Family, clients, and people on the street are capable of attaching to us psychically, if we allow it. A number of therapists I know experience extreme fatigue at the end of the day. By utilizing methods of protection, this can be minimized. I encourage people to protect before meeting with clients and after. At the beginning of the session, you can shield and ask for your guardians to protect you from anything that seeks to do you harm. Have a spray that you use at the same time. These days, people often use essential oils in a spray form, but pure water can be used if it has been asked to protect you. Hold the water in your hand and charge it for protection. At the end of the day, you may choose to cleanse in a shower, maintaining an image in your mind of all the psychic energy being washed down the drain. If a shower is not available, imagine the shower, with all the negativity you may have collected being cleansed away, dropping into the earth, and being transmuted into love and healing.



I have read many books on psychic protection. By far, the best book I have read is by Christopher Penczak, who discusses all matters relating to psychic protection in his book, *The Witch's Shield*. This book is filled with exercises to build your protection. Psychic protection is a skill that has to be developed and practiced over time. The reality is that we are creating a magickal protection by bringing our thoughts into our physical world by using the power of our mind, and you will find that other people react to your protection. Love is the most powerful force we have, and I encourage everyone to focus on love not fear.

Moira Payne was born and raised in Ann Arbor. She walks the path of the Witch, having respect for all things in this world and beyond. You may find her on the second Tuesdays of each month from 6-8pm at Crazy Wisdom's Witches' Night Out. If you would like to email, please feel free to contact her at WitchesOfAnnArbor@umich.edu.

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Kathy Braun and the Role of Hypnotherapy in Healing

By Pat Shure • Photo by Susan Ayer

Kathy Braun, the Clinical Hypnotherapist of Ann Arbor Hypnotherapy, is my cousin. When she relocated to Ann Arbor about fifteen years ago we all wanted to hear about her hypnosis practice. I was interested, but skeptical. I thought the "hypnotic state" was fiction. Kathy wouldn't talk about her practice—explaining that the sessions she has with her clients are strictly confidential. She preferred to talk about what she calls her "bragging rights" back in the day when she was in a New York Shakespeare Festival production of *Measure for Measure* starring Meryl Streep.

But as time went on, and she began to accumulate interesting testimonials on her website, more and more people seemed convinced that something real was happening. I wanted to see for myself, so I asked her if I could observe a session. She asked one of her clients, a medical student who was coping with test anxiety, if it would be okay for him to have an observer at their next session. He agreed, I watched the session, and it changed my mind about hypnosis. I saw that the hypnotic state is not just fiction, it's a very real mental state. It's my hope that my interview with Kathy will help readers understand how hypnosis works and how it can enable healing.

But as time went on, and she began to accumulate interesting testimonials on her website, more and more people seemed convinced that something real was happening.

Pat Shure: Can you talk a little about the hypnotic state?

Kathy Braun: Sure. There's a lot of misunderstanding and frankly, nonsense, about what hypnosis really is. When you think about it, hypnosis is the only healing modality that's also used for entertainment. "Hey, let's get a hypnotist for the senior party—or for the wedding rehearsal—or just for fun!" You never hear "Hey, let's get a dentist to do a root canal for the senior party!"

Of course, with entertainment, anything goes. When a magician says "And now ladies and gentlemen, watch me saw this lovely lady in half!" the audience enjoys the show—they know he's not about to commit murder. They know it's a trick, and by now, most people know what the trick is. But they're not there at the show for healing, they're there for fun.

Entertainment hypnosis works on the idea that most people don't know a crucial core truth about hypnosis. "He made me cluck like a chicken," they'll say. But in reality a hypnotist can't make anyone do anything. It simply doesn't have that property. Hypnosis absolutely cannot overcome free will. If it did, hypnotists would be billionaires—they're not. If it did, prisoners of war would come home working for the enemy—they don't.

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Pat Shure: So, exactly how does it work?

Kathy Braun: Clinical hypnotherapy has a whole other purpose than entertainment. Like any other clinical modality its purpose is to help restore health and well-being.

Science steps in here to help, because hypnosis is a mental state that can actually be measured. The EEG, or electroencephalogram, measures the bioelectrical activity in the brain.

So, if you had an EEG measurement when you were asleep your brain waves would show one pattern—generally, in sleep, a pattern that could be described as a gently rolling ocean. In a hypnotic state you'd show what science has named an alpha wave.

Generally speaking (because there are exceptions) when we're awake our brain is producing either an alpha or a beta wave. Most of the time when we're awake we'll show a beta wave. On the monitor it looks angular and sharp. It's very fast. Every second it waves–goes up and comes down—about 17 to 21 times. That's per second. Fast.

If you're feeling super anxious or having a panic attack you'd probably register at the high end of the beta spectrum. If you're just walking around being awake you'd probably register at the low end. Nevertheless, even the low end is fast.

Pat Shure: Okay, and what about alpha waves?

Kathy Braun: In a small minority of the time, you might show an alpha wave. An alpha wave isn't angular, it's rounded. Even visually, compared to the beta wave, it actually looks much more relaxed. It resembles the sleep wave, that is to say rolling and rounded, but with a bigger amplitude (the height of each wave). The important point about the alpha wave is that it's considerably slower than the beta. Every second it waves only 8 to 12 times a second. Much slower. And from a subjective point of view, it feels much different. It feels super relaxed.

Usually an alpha wave will present itself in very specific settings. Here we're talking about hypnosis, but you can also see an alpha wave in people who are in deep meditation. There's definitely an overlap between the hypnotic state and the meditative state.

When you think about it, hypnosis is the only healing modality that's also used for entertainment.

PS: What's good about the alpha state?

KB: There are many wonderful things about the alpha state. First of all, it feels great. It's the very opposite of feeling anxious.

Second of all, all by itself, it leads to healing. The body/mind much prefers to feel super relaxed than to feel super anxious and that preference plays out in many different manifestations of well-being or its absence.

Third, it's the state that's most desirable for effective Suggestion Therapy, to further goals that have been mutually chosen by therapist and client.

And fourth, a terrific benefit from my point of view, is that it's easily learned. I regard accessing the alpha state, and all its benefits, as a skill. I love to teach it. Teaching it is a central part of my approach to working with clients.

PS: What about all the exotic things one hears about hypnosis?

KB: Oh, it's fascinating, no doubt. When I was in hypno school we watched a program from the BBC about a surgeon in Madrid who *only* uses hypnosis as an anesthetic. Not me, I must say. Neither doing that kind of hypnosis, nor wanting it for myself. If I have to have surgery where someone is cutting into my body, give me conventional anesthesia, is what I say.

This article originally was set to appear just when our whole world changed. Here's how Ann Arbor Hypnotherapy has changed. All sessions are now by phone only. Health workers who are working directly with Covid-19 patients are invited at no cost to let Ann Arbor Hypnotherapy help you stay focused and calm. For all others, fees are reduced by 25% to make help available to as broad a base as possible.

But that being said, in the last thirty years there's been a lot of scholarly work concerning the placebo effect—it's currently in the process of making a full 180 degree turn regarding the opinion about its worth. In the past it was regarded as sort of a nuisance that shows up in approximately 30% of double blind drug trials across the board—with every type of disorder and every type of drug. That's a huge number. Now it's being seen as a vanguard effect that demonstrates the incredible potential of the power of the mind.

By the way, may I insert something here or do you have a question?

PS: No, go ahead.

There's definitely an overlap between the hypnotic state and the meditative state.

KB: I forgot to say a few more basic truths about being in the hypnotic state. One, you remain conscious, you don't fall asleep. Hypnosis as sleep is very old school. "Watch the moving stopwatch. You are falling asleeep." Of course, if you're sleep deprived, simply becoming profoundly relaxed does tend to make you want to go home and take a nap. Good, I say. Sleep deprivation is not good. Feels crappy and also not good for the health. And the stats tell me that many, if not most Americans, are sleep deprived.

Also, here's a biggie—the hypnotic state is not a truth serum. You can actually tell a lie when you're hypnotized. When I was in hypno school this reality about hypnosis surprised me the most. But it's true. You remain in control. I tell my clients: "I can't put you in a trance, extract your PIN number from you, go to your bank, take out your money, and run away. Not possible."

And then there's the myth I call "The Screenwriter's Favorite." For example, the plot goes that a terrorist comes into the office during your session, shoots the hypnotherapist, and you're stuck in hypnosis forever. Nonsense. You'd just open your eyes.

PS: What are your favorite issues to work with?

KB: Well, of course I love helping people banish anxiety. Anxiety is an emotional toxin which is debilitating to health and well-being. My mission is to help all my clients be peaceful and happy.

Smoking cessation is way up there. People often come to me because they're due for surgery and their surgeons won't operate on someone who smokes. It's an intensive care program. I use hypnosis combined with EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), also called tapping, a form of simple energy work. I never make guarantees—I think it would be unethical—but if I made guarantees I'd guarantee my smoking cessation program because the success rate is so high.

But my number one favorite is trauma release. I use it in many situations, but my favorite is releasing the trauma of childhood abuse. It's a tragedy that so many people walk around for years suffering the lingering effects of abuse.

PS: Trauma release—that sounds fascinating. Tell me more about it?

KB: Well, of course there are different types of trauma. For example, being in a horrible car accident as an adult is different from abuse during childhood. I'll tell you about childhood trauma.

One of the things I see regularly is that the client often won't tell me about it in the intake session but waits a few sessions and then sort of casually mentions it at the end of a session. My feeling is that she's been waiting to see if she can trust me. My response is usually, "I'm so sorry to hear about that. But I have a process that I think could help you. We'll talk about it at the next session."

PS: And then what happens?

KB: Then I go into detail at the next session. By then, she's had a few sessions with me and has become familiar with what being in hypnosis is all about and is also familiar with EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique). She's not only familiar with them on an intellectual level, but in those few early sessions she's actually experienced the relief that they can bring.

When I tell her about the trauma release process I explain to her one of the reasons she's been suffering long into adulthood with the aftereffects of what happened in childhood is because part of her is pushing away from the feelings those memories evoke—it's natural to want to avoid distressing feelings. But with trauma release, part of the process is actually letting those feelings emerge.

But not to worry, for several reasons. First of all, we'll be letting those feelings emerge so we can release them once and for all. Secondly, it won't be like she'll become a child again. She's an adult this time and she's in control and I'm there to be in control with her. And third of all, even though we want the old painful feelings to emerge, at the same time she'll know she's in the reality of being in a recliner in her hypnotherapist's office.

I regard accessing the alpha state, and all its benefits, as a skill. I love to teach it. Teaching it is a central part of my approach to working with clients.

PS: So, you've prepared her for the process. What is the actual process like?

KB: Yes, preparing her for the process is super crucial. At the next session, we use hypnosis to help her access the old feelings and then, when she's experiencing the feelings, we use EFT to dissolve them.

EFT is an incredible technique. Those practitioners who have used it know what I'm talking about. I was very slow to integrate it into my practice because it just hardly seemed real. I think of it (and explain it to my clients) as the antibiotic of emotional work. Before antibiotics were discovered and employed, the number one cause of medical death throughout history was infection and then boom, antibiotics changed everything.

After we go through the feelings and dissolve them, I'll repeat the whole process to make sure the feelings really are dissolved. The memories remain, but like scenes in a movie. The feelings are dissolved, released.

Often in just a handful of sessions the process lets people finally feel free. A satisfying resolution for us both.

To learn more about Kathy Braun visit the Ann Arbor Hypnotherapy website at annarborhypnotherapy.com or email her at kathy@annarborhypnotherapy.com.

Stepping Into The Current of Wisdom

By Sibel Ozer

I recently came across a photo of an autumn leaf inside a hand. The veins of the leaf lined up with the lifelines of the palm, blending into one another. A beautiful image of our interconnectedness.

I think of the psyche similarly, as an extension of nature, an invisible landscape with its various terrains, different weather patterns, and inhabitants.

When it comes to understanding and navigating life and relationships there often seems to be an element of "building a puzzle with missing pieces." In other words, an element of the unknown or unknowable.

Compared to previous generations we know a lot more about a range of topics involving the mechanisms of human thinking, emotions, and behavior from the role of genetics, the functioning of the brain, the impact of the environment, and the place emotions play in rational decision making. And yet, for all the knowledge available to us, certainty around what would be most needed or helpful to a particular person dealing with a unique life situation remains just outside our reach. This doesn't mean that there aren't answers to be had, but rather that a journey is needed to reach them.

In a psychotherapy session it is often after something is chosen and pursued that we get to find out whether or not it really was what was most needed by the way our client reacts to it. Some sessions are helpful while others are just what the psyche needed that the mind didn't even know it needed. I've watched over the years how the latter often comes through an unfolding that was spontaneous, as opposed to a meticulously executed therapy plan.

The first decade of my career as a psychotherapist was spent deepening my practice as I continued to acquire information through numerous post-graduate trainings. Our training recommends that we make assessments and follow treatment plans, that we increase our knowledge and techniques, that our sessions follow an agenda based on the study of the client through rational inquiry. As the years went by, and I continued to pay attention to the quality between my sessions with regards to what worked and helped, I found myself prioritizing the emergence and unfolding of sessions in their own accord, which is a far less cerebral process, than the former. The seeking of wisdom, it turns out, is a different endeavor then the seeking of information.

This doesn't mean that there aren't answers to be had, but rather that a journey is needed to reach them.

Einstein is attributed to have said that the intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift. So, even as it is logical to rely on the rational mind more than intuition because it is the only seemingly reliable source that we can depend on, I have come to realize the wisdom to give more consideration to the suggestions of the intuitive mind despite its lack of controllability and predictability.

It feels harder to go to intuition for advice as there are no guarantees as to what, let alone if, we will receive something. This ambiguity feels very distasteful to the mind. And yet, most seasoned therapists rely on intuition regularly knowing that if we hold on to our carefully mapped up treatment goals or step-by-step treatment protocols too tightly, it is hard to attune to the less concrete factors of relationship.

The real dilemma lies in the challenge of holding on to knowledge as well as tuning into the mysterious unknown that has a capacity to reveal what is most needed simultaneously. So, I am not suggesting that we choose between the two minds, but rather that we allow the reconfiguration of our knowledge base to be new and fresh with each client, which can only happen through the leadership of our inner wisdom.

The real dilemma lies in the challenge of holding on to knowledge as well as tuning into the mysterious unknown that has a capacity to reveal what is most needed simultaneously.

artwork by Sibel Ozer

When I was in training for sensorimotor psychotherapy with Pat Ogden, she would present a concept with great detail—starting with a definition, moving onto applications, and then adding a video example of how she used the concept in session. We would then pair up to practice the concept with one another in an effort to move the theoretical into practice. I remember a particular day I was overwhelmed with trying to hold onto all the pieces of information I had just received as we were moving into the experiential. When I voiced my concern, her counsel was simple. "Let go of everything you just learned, and do what you do." I remember thinking this must be a bad joke, that somehow what she said was paradoxical—the goal was that I retain the information, not forget it, I was pretty sure.

What she meant, of course, was that I didn't need to lead from the knowledge or hold on to it for dear life. She meant that the knowledge had already entered my system, would probably need some time to be digested, and that in the meantime I was there to try things on, let things unfold, and learn from that as much as the teachings. The real teaching was hidden in how she applied these principles herself: creatively, with flexibility, no one session of hers looking like another, each one requiring her to combine the principles in a unique way or come up with new ones when necessary. The heart of the teaching was that attending to the revelations of the body over the mind are more effective in working with trauma clients. The way we went about doing that would look slightly different every time.

Allowing therapy to be unique and different with each session requires us to lead not from the mind that likes to commandeer a session, but from a collaborative approach between the mind and intuition. This requires being client centered, being willing to let their psyche decide what matters and how to go about attending to things. It also means being open to the field between therapist and client and all that might be residing there which is invisible to the eye—such as the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious, and the transpersonal realms.

There is a current of wisdom that runs through the land like a river, and this is where we can find our connection to our inner being, what Jung called the Self with a capital S.

An art piece I created while thinking of working in this way revealed a topographical difference between the mind and intuition. We often think of the psyche in parts and it is pretty hard wired in our minds that there are layers similar to an iceberg, some available to decipher, residing above ground, and others needing digging into layers.

What my painting revealed was the difference in the landscape of the two minds (sometimes also referred to as a left brain/right brain dichotomy). I now think of the rational mind as solid land, which includes the conscious and parts of the unconscious realms, as the unconscious often comprises of what the conscious mind rejects. And I have come to understand that insight and wisdom are to be found in the waters. There is a current of wisdom that runs through the land like a river and this is where we can find our connection to our inner being, what Jung called the Self with a capital S. This is the place where attunement happens, where intuition runs free, and where wisdom is all abound, apart from the knowledge that resides in the mind, but able to draw from it.

This difference is often referred to as a separation between the mind and the heart, the mind being the source of cognition, and the heart, of intuition. The heart, however, is also designated to be the container of emotions, and emotions are more connected to the mind than wisdom. Or rather, emotions appear as the weather patterns on the landscape, having a cyclical nature to them. Appearing, intensifying, and then transforming into something else. We would be remiss to rely on our emotions over our thoughts, thinking they are the source of wisdom. Wisdom is a dynamic in its own right, separate from mind-generated thoughts and emotions.

And yet, western society seems to have overvalued rationality, and often ridicules or dismisses the creative function, as if we are walking around as minds without a soul, or heads without a body.

The current of wisdom refers to the place Yunus Emre, a Turkish wonderer and poet, defined as:

"There is a me inside of me, deeper than I."

I know that when I enter the waters as opposed to staying on land, I am no longer thinking, but allowing the questions and answers to reveal themselves in their own rhythm. I am not deliberating or commandeering, but rather letting the session unfold as if it were an intuitive painting, getting out of the way so that the current of wisdom can offer its gifts. It is not that I am cutting access to my knowledge as much as letting it configure itself in a creative way, almost of its own accord. It is a practice of allowing the questions and answers to arise, as opposed to thinking them up.

When we suppress intuition, when we function from cognition only, we cut ourselves off from what makes us truly alive, awake, in harmony, and connected to the rest of life.

When it comes to grappling with the meaning of life and actions humanity makes individually and collectively, we need the accumulation of knowledge that builds upon itself, some of it changing with time, some remaining as unchangeable as the temperature at which water freezes. We also need to rely on our creativity, our myths, theater, art, music, literature, and poetry, that also change over time, and yet continue to address the mysteries of life, the unknowable and the confounding, the boundlessness of the universe and love, the existential angst and search for meaning that exists in us all, our attempts to come to terms with the harsh realities of sickness, aging and death, our interconnectedness and interdependence with all living things, and the choices we make contrary to reason.

Rollo May wrote *The Cry for Myth* in 1991, and Thomas Moore's *Care of the Soul* was published a year later, both of them clarifying our need for myths suggesting against reason that they are not falsehoods. That they are not products of the imagination that have no value or weight compared to the rational mind, but that they need to be recognized as essential to human health, valued as equally as we would value both sides of our brain.

And yet, western society seems to have overvalued rationality, and often ridicules or dismisses the creative function, as if we are walking around as minds without a soul, or heads without a body. Mental health itself is often neglected compared to physical health, as it seems less straightforward to deal with, let alone heal. Disconnected from the layers of our being, we have lost our connection to other living things, including nature Herself.

I found a most fitting analogy in Mary Reynolds's *The Garden Awakening*. She writes about the land being alive, both in terms of teeming with creatures on and below the surface, and also in the way we are alive—conscious, and capable of feeling, hurting, and healing. She is referring to the few remaining wild places left, where the Spirit of the earth flows freely, where harmony and balance exist, where humankind hasn't changed the natural order of things. As she discusses the difference between an English garden and a wild one, I thought it is not that different from a person who is all Mind, disconnected from their Inner Being.

When we suppress intuition, when we function from cognition only, we cut ourselves off from what makes us truly alive, awake, in harmony, and connected to the rest of life.

In our work as psychotherapists if we rely solely on knowledge and our mind, we lose out on the wealth of information that resides in the currents of wisdom that reside within each of us, ourselves, and our clients. It is not as comfortable to flow with the waters as it is to stand on land, yet it proves to be immeasurably helpful to offer our clients what might be most needed in a given moment.

Sibel Ozer is a licensed professional counselor and board-certified art therapist practicing privately in downtown Ann Arbor. She is a certified EMDR practitioner and a graduate of the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland. She gives experiential workshops nationally and in her country of origin (Turkey) on different art therapy topics. Visit sibelozer.com for more information.

Yin Feminism:

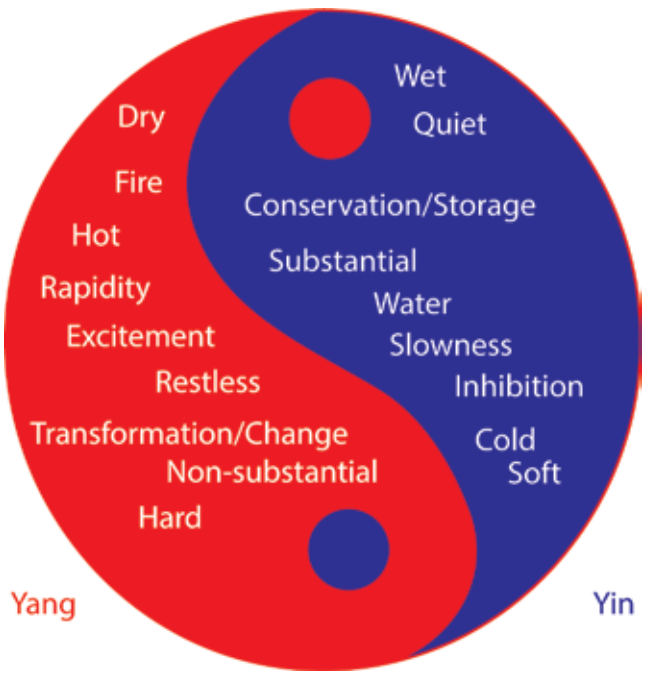
Why We Need Balance More Than We Need a Female President

By Kathleen Ivanoff

What is missing in many feminist theories is that they do not address the historical and ongoing lack of valuing, cultivating, and supporting what has been traditionally associated with the feminine or "yin" side of life.

Yin and yang are terms that come from Taoism—a way of working with natural flow and balance that arose in ancient China and explains how the basic structure of all dualities, or pairs of opposites, must be in harmony if one wants to abide in peace, health, and happiness.

Here is a diagram to illustrate:



These two kinds of energies are expressed in nature, but through our long history of over-valuing only one side, our cultures, society, and nature itself, have become profoundly imbalanced. Yang energy (associated with masculine traits) is glorified and upheld as an ideal, while yin energy (assigned to the feminine) is denigrated and denied its value as an equal and necessary aspect of life. It is this imbalance, endorsed and disseminated through our most powerful cultural institutions—religion, education, and politics—that maintains the status quo. We have been duped into believing that yin/feminine/female is simply not as valuable as yang/masculine/male. This breakdown of categories, however, is only the most simplistic way of looking at it. Since human beings are also part of nature, everyone has both yin and yang characteristics, regardless of gender identification. Further, and most important, both of these energies can be expressed in both balanced and unbalanced ways.

For example, let's take one very basic duality: *action/rest*. *Action* is associated with yang energy. *Action* in itself is not inherently positive or negative—it depends totally on what is needed to bring coherence to any given circumstance. The same can be said for its yin opposite, *rest*. *Rest* is not bad or good in itself, but a condition that is equally important for balance and harmony. Since the yang polarity is held superior, *action* is over-valued as a cultural norm. There is even a sense that every moment must be in service to "productivity." Many feel nagging guilt because they fail to appease the voice in their head that is telling them they haven't done enough, or are worried that if they pause, stop, and rest, they will lose the capacity to get up again. The speed of life has seemingly increased because we are immersed in conditions that are a result of profound imbalance—the cult of busyness, workaholism, and three coffee shops on the corner.

What is missing in many feminist theories is that they do not address the historical and ongoing lack of valuing, cultivating, and supporting what has been traditionally associated with the feminine or "yin" side of life.

Now consider *action's* opposite—*rest.* It's obvious we absolutely do not consider *rest* to be as important as *action*—it is more like something that we *must* do in order to get back to the "real" business of being productive. Many people, even when they are desperately wishing to be able to let go of the day, find they have trouble sleeping, or return from a vacation feeling even more exhausted. We simply do not prioritize the very real need to do nothing—to stop taking in stimulation and responding to it, to have gaps and spaces in our day that allow us to rest, and to actually do less in winter, and not feel defeated. *Rest* is not a *better* state than *actio*tn. It is, and always has been, its equal. But we do not treat it that way.

We have been duped into believing that yin/feminine/female is simply not as valuable as yang/masculine/male.

Everyone benefits when they look into *themselves* and see how they are currently manifesting both sides of any pair of opposites and try to adjust toward what is needed to feel and function well. It is simple in theory, but it soon becomes obvious that even if we agree to needed change, the velocity of habits coming from internalized societal values pushes back when we try to prioritize differently. If you recognize this as true, ask yourself: How am I maintaining this distorted bias in my own life?

I suggest we are struggling with inequity because there is still no genuine application of value given to the yin side of life. Yin qualities are simply not appreciated as equally important. As an example, there are now many organizations that give scholarships and encouragement to girls and women who want to pursue education in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. These are traditionally the domain of male authority and power and still lead to the kind of career path that carries high prestige and cultural validation. But who is offering prestigious scholarships and awards to those who want to be teachers, nurses, and social workers? Any profession traditionally associated with the realm of the feminine is still very much undervalued, both in esteem and financial compensation.

Even use of the term "patriarchy" just seems to turn off most people these days…

Yin feminism is for everyone. By drawing attention to the relative lack of value that we maintain regarding yin characteristics, my hope is that we begin to understand things in terms of these energies and how they are embodied, rather than through the more rigid and externalized categories of male and female that tend to embattle people and which ignore all of the subtleties of how sex, gender, and energy, are expressed.

Even use of the term "patriarchy" just seems to turn off most people these days, as it has become perceived shorthand for expressing blame and excoriating criticism of men while generally ignoring how harmful it is to them, too. Patriarchy is poisonous because it has convinced everyone that "yangism," or exaggerating the value of

traits associated with masculinity and further deformed by a dominator mentality, is somehow the recipe for respect and success.

Why has feminism failed to create true parity thus far, and instead, often become yet another way people divide against each other? Feminists fought for and were grudgingly given a green light for women to pursue *some* of the benefits that most men have enjoyed as birthright. These include education, voting rights, and permission to compete for positions of power and authority outside of the only role within which women have traditionally been allowed power: *mother*.

Why has feminism failed to create true parity thus far, and instead, often become yet another way people divide against each other?

This brings me to the area of politics and women. As we saw in 2016, there was a great eagerness among many people to see Hillary Clinton become the first female president. However, I don't think you have to do much scratching below the surface to see that her political policies aligned themselves with some of the worst aspects of "yangism." As Secretary of State, she supported positions such as world-wide fracking and numerous military interventions. Whether she took these positions to show strength or because she actually believed they would be helpful doesn't matter—she represented the status quo, and I believe this is the reason she failed. We *must* look deeper than the obvious category of gender. We must look toward embracing policies that support the qualities currently missing in our culture that would relieve the unnecessary suffering perpetuated by the notion that rugged individualism is an attainable, superior goal, and that we can continue to plunder Earth's resources without consequences.

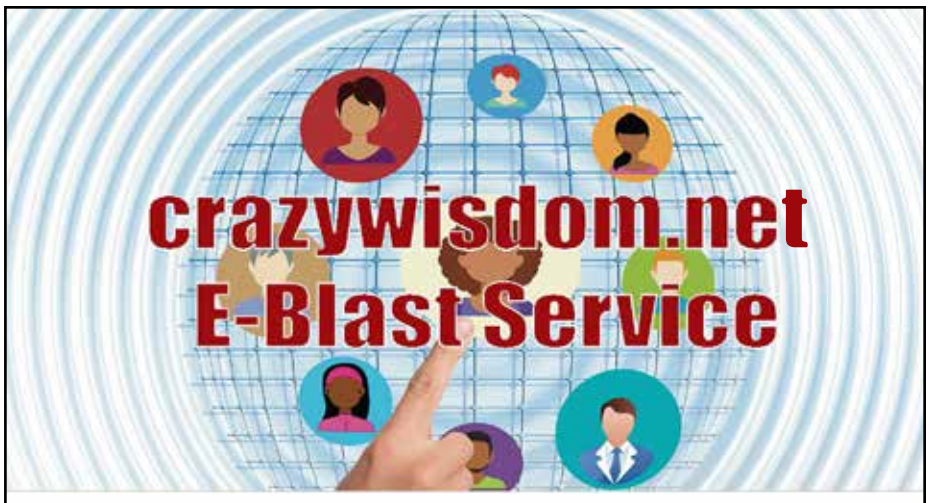
This year, we are again facing a choice that will determine how we either continue to support profound imbalance, or course-correct and choose a way that will bring about the kind of change necessary to survive and thrive. The truth is that we already have the means to address the problems we face—what we don't yet have is the commitment to allocate our resources and energy in this direction. Even on a symbolic level, if the majority of our taxes are funding the war machine, how can we expect peace?

It might be tempting to assume that political centrism would be the right choice for balance. Again, however, we must look deeper than the rhetoric that embraces a return to status quo as "normal"—something we just need to "get back to." No—we are in crisis because thousands of years of lopsided values brought us here, and we are really only just beginning to acknowledge that this is not sustainable. Further, we are still not attending to the root cause!

Yin feminism is a direct way of considering and addressing a standard that will restore and replenish life on both an individual and cultural level.

Yin feminism is a direct way of considering and addressing a standard that will restore and replenish life on both an individual and cultural level. Sadly, it appears that we are not yet ready in our society to see a woman in the ultimate position of power who is *not* upholding the yang status quo. Let us consider what is most important, nourishing, and enlivening, and see what seems to block the ability to access and implement it. As individuals, we have limited capacity to do this if our systems are allocating all our resources for the opposite intent. Now is the time that great change is imminent. Feminism must shift into a clear recognition that what is allied with the feminine—restoration, nurturing health and well-being, emotional depth, and interdependence—is not something to disassociate from in order to garner respect. We must embrace these qualities, live them, and vote them in.

Kathleen Ivanoff holds a master's degree in Gender Studies and another in Clinical Psychology. As the former program director for Jewel Heart, she worked closely with Gelek Rimpoche to establish the teaching curriculum and taught various courses in Buddhist meditation. She currently teaches creative writing at EMU and has a private counseling practice. To contact her, email kathleenivanoff@gmail.com.



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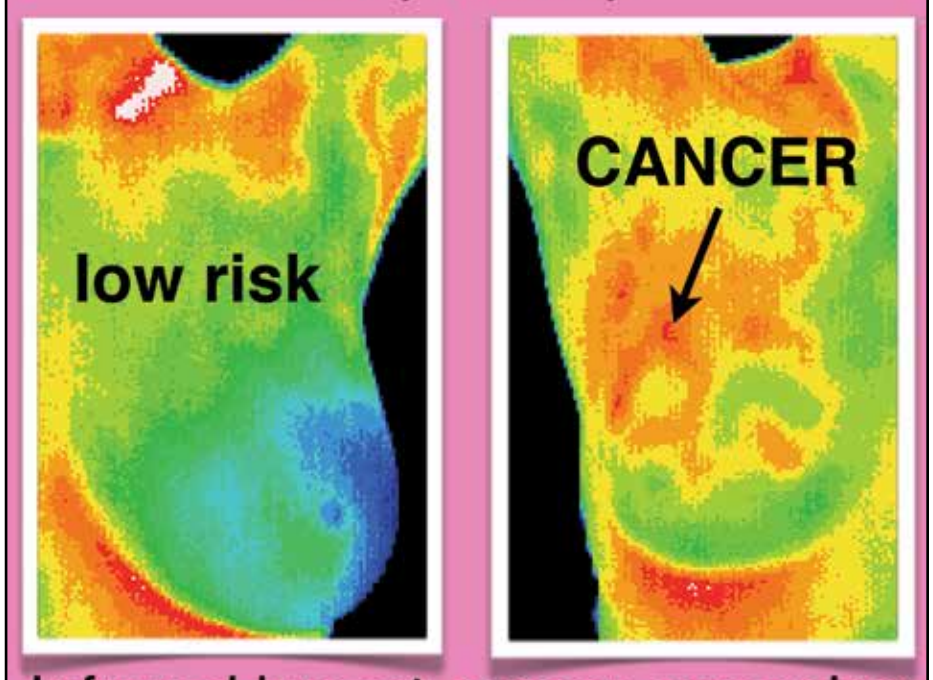

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A Conversation with Erin Stohl and Dan DeSena about Somatic-Oriented Psychotherapies

I loved that we could learn together and share this experience.
– Dan DeSena

By Sara Vos

Photos by Joni Strickfaden

An Ann Arbor couple, Erin Stohl and Dan DeSena, has found a place within the local somatic psychotherapy community. I sat down with Stohl and DeSena, pre-pandemic, to learn about how they came to somatic psychotherapy, and how their experiences as somatic psychotherapists have impacted their relationship. Stohl and DeSena are both seeing patients via video chat and doing appointments by phone.

Sara Vos: Can you tell me what somatic psychotherapy is?

Erin Stohl: Somatic, or body-centered psychotherapy, is a holistic approach to therapy that focuses on the relationship between the mind and body and sees the body as a deep source of innate wisdom.

Dan DeSena: Often a big part of healing comes from our ability to tap into that inner wisdom that is deeper than just the intellectual, thinking mind. Somatic therapy helps us to do that. Exactly how it is done depends on the type of therapy, but ultimately somatic therapy is about using the body's innate wisdom to help us learn about ourselves and move toward healing. One way is by helping people learn how to pay attention to, and get information about themselves from, the subconscious — through the automatic, physical impulses and emotions that our body generates [below the level of our conscious awareness].

Feeling my body in space, and moving energy through my body with physical exertion, was the primary way that I learned to manage stress and the energy that comes with powerful feelings, like anger.
– Erin Stohl

Sara Vos: What made you want to pursue this path professionally?

Erin Stohl: My interest and intrigue with the body started when I was an athlete, throughout my childhood and during college. Feeling my body in space, and moving energy through my body with physical exertion, was the primary way that I learned to manage stress and the energy that comes with powerful feelings, like anger. The physicality of being an athlete and transforming strong emotional energy through movement and competition was so helpful in a lot of ways.

Then in my early 20s, I shifted to exploring holistic approaches to health and healing. Although I didn't fully realize it at the time, I believe I was primarily drawn to learning about healing and psychotherapy as a way to heal myself.

My curiosity about energy and the relationship between the body, mind, and emotions, led me to learn reiki and other energy cultivation practices. After becoming a social worker and starting my holistic psychotherapy practice, I learned about Sensorimotor Psychotherapy (SP) from my supervisor, Dr. Carrie Hatcher-Kay. This approach to therapy felt like a great fit because of its holistic nature. It blends traditional dynamic therapy with somatic awareness, mindfulness, and interpersonal neurobiology, which really resonates with how I understand myself and others.

Dan DeSena: I came from a really intellectual family—it was like a family where we had heads floating around on bodies and the body was kind of disconnected, you know? I also had Carrie Hatcher-Kay as a supervisor here in Ann Arbor. I started working with her in 2014, I believe, and through Partners in Healing, an organization formed by Carrie Hatcher-Kay, Sharon Gold-Steinberg, and César Valdez, I received trainings in somatic-based therapies, especially for trauma. After I started working with Carrie I started to realize how disconnected from my own body I was, and I started exploring this for myself. This [exploration] had such a big impact on me that I decided to enroll in Sensorimotor training. I finished the Level 2 training in SP with Erin at the end of 2017. There is a Level 3, too, which is the certification course. So we aren't actually certified in SP quite yet.

Sara Vos: What makes somatic psychotherapy different, unique, or cutting edge?

Dan DeSena: Somatic psychotherapy is a complicated thing to try to explain briefly—this is why it takes so long to train! Big picture: it isn't completely new if you think about the long history of somatic therapies that are embedded in many spiritual and ancient healing traditions. For example, Taoist and Indian traditions nicely blend the physical, mental, and spiritual elements into a holistic system and often involve a mind-body component. And these traditions are aligned with, or have influenced systems of, therapy such as craniosacral therapy, massage therapy, Polarity Therapy, and many others.

These healing traditions use attuned awareness of one's internal state, and healers traditionally get really good at noticing the subtle changes in a person when they have an emotional block or challenge. Modern somatic therapies draw on the same

types of intuitive knowledge. It *is* unique from certain types of "talk" therapy in the sense that the therapist is not just listening to what the client is saying, but they are also scanning the client's body visually for subtle changes and indications that the body is communicating, and these signs help lead the therapist and client together naturally toward healing.

Erin Stohl: And I think that Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, while drawing on some of those ancient healing traditions, also has a foundation in some of our traditional psychotherapies like psychoanalysis and psychodynamic therapy. But it builds in other somatic elements that wouldn't be as much a part of psychoanalysis. So, the body is not absent from some forms of traditional therapy, but in SP the body is a greater focus in the therapeutic process.

SV: Is there a network of somatic practitioners in the area?

DD: Yes. Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, in particular, is growing in Ann Arbor because of the work that Partners in Healing has done to promote the therapy. There have been a number of SP trainings in the Ann Arbor area over the last five years, and there are more and more therapists that are trained to deliver this treatment. For a long time, there have been many, many practitioners here that do a variety of somatically-oriented therapies. In the area of psychotherapy we've had somatic therapists since the 1960s and maybe even before. *(Editor's Note: Reichian psychoanalysis was around in the 1950s, and Bioenergetic Analysis and Rolfing were somatic therapies that were around in the 1960s.)* The names of the therapies change over time, but the essence of them has remained the same. Sensorimotor Psychotherapy is one of a variety of therapy types that can be considered somatically-focused, and it is a modern incarnation with its own strengths, I think.

ES: I agree with that. For me, personally, I have appreciated how many more therapists are offering somatic psychotherapies like Sensorimotor Psychotherapy and another one called Somatic Experiencing. Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) has been around for awhile and just keeps growing. It's been really nice to have more somatic psychotherapists to refer to, and there is a good-sized community of somatic psychotherapists here. It's exciting.

SV: What aspects of body-centered psychotherapy are most helpful or interesting to you?

ES: I think it gives people other options for how to regulate emotions. For example, if someone is experiencing some kind of painful emotion, they may have a hard time regulating their emotions with something more mental, like journaling or talking. They might first need to start with a physical, mindfulness-focused practice to shift their emotional energy, and then maybe afterward they could journal or talk things out with someone else.

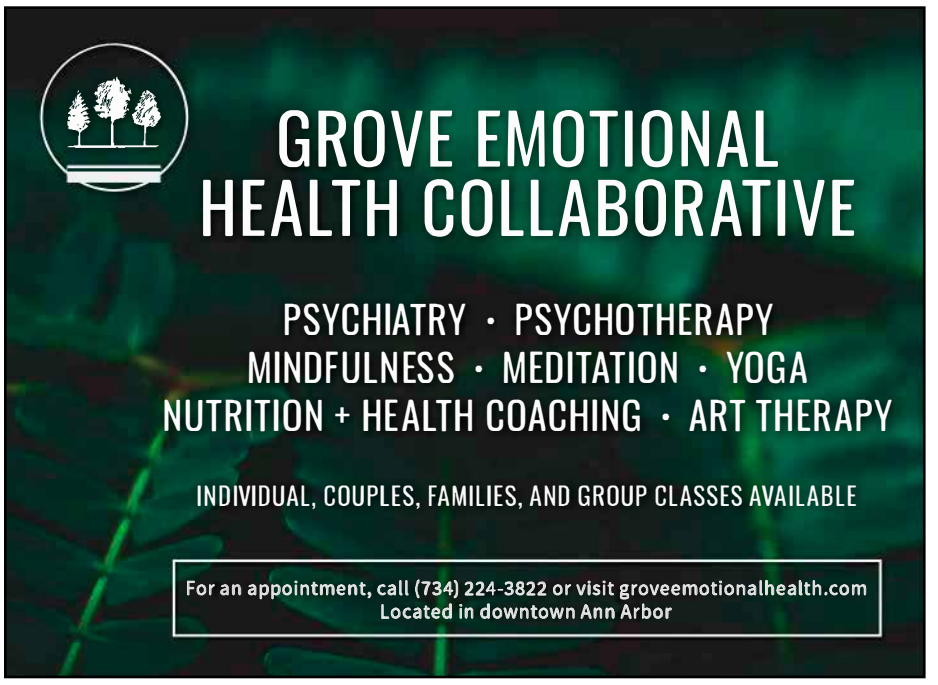
> For example, if someone is experiencing some kind of painful emotion, they may have a hard time regulating their emotions with something more mental, like journaling or talking.
>
> – Erin Stohl

DD: I like that it gives me another way of teaming with a client to understand what is happening on an unconscious level. This gives us more routes to make change.

SV: So, how about your personal lives? In what ways has your somatic training shifted the ways you approach your relationship?

DD: Haha… well, I met Erin at a Sensorimotor Psychotherapy training, for one (laughs). We were not together as a couple during the SP Level 1 training. But then we did Level 2 together. I loved that we could learn together and share this experience. Another way it has affected us is that it gives us another common language to help us navigate our relationship. For example, it helps that I know that Erin gets a lot out of movement to help her feel more regulated. So we have worked out ways to work with this physical energy together. Like sometimes we even wrestle (laughs).

> Often a big part of healing comes from our ability to tap into that inner wisdom that is deeper than just the intellectual, thinking mind.
>
> – Dan DeSena



ES: Haha! Yeah, we've come up with creative ways to shift tension and emotional charge that comes up between us. It really helps! Also, the more I have learned about the attachment dynamics that come up in relationships, the more compassion and appreciation I have for anyone navigating the terrain of relationships. And I don't just mean people in romantic relationships or partnerships…any relationship can trigger the most vulnerable, scared, angry, or hurt parts of ourselves, and I think it takes a lot of courage to be willing to navigate all of this within one's self and within a relationship.

I think the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy training, in addition to other information I have learned over time about relationships, has helped me to feel reassured when Dan and I are experiencing some type of conflict. More and more I have felt a sense of trust in navigating conflict in our relationship and in all of my relationships. It is natural and ultimately builds more connection and intimacy.

> …the more I have learned about the attachment dynamics that come up in relationships, the more compassion and appreciation I have for anyone navigating the terrain of relationships.
>
> – Erin Stohl

SV: To me, it's so powerful to hear the way you process emotions together in a healthy physical way. I haven't heard of that before, and I really love it! Since we're getting to the end of the interview, do you have any advice for readers about how to bring somatic wisdom to their everyday interactions at work, school, and home?

DD: I think we live in a thinking-heavy, left-brain dominant society. Some of what I am going to say comes from my own personal experience, too…but I think that we need more right brain in our world to balance out the left-brain… There is nothing wrong with rational thinking—it is really necessary! But without the balance of right-brain feeling, empathy, and intuition we can find ourselves more and more disconnected from others and the world at large. I think that a "micro" way we can add some of this balance is by getting more into our emotions and into our body. So, if I had to give advice I'd recommend practicing something body-oriented like Tai Chi, Yoga, or exercise—something that is not focused on an outcome, but rather on the process of being in one's body.

> …without the balance of right-brain feeling, empathy, and intuition we can find ourselves more and more disconnected from others, and the world at large.
>
> – Dan DeSena

ES: I agree with Dan about the benefits of being more connected to the body, feelings, and intuition. The thinking mind can be really helpful, but it can get pretty out of balance if we don't have ways to integrate the wisdom of the body. My advice would be for people to sense into what feels like a fun way to move. That might look like trying out Yoga or Feldenkrais for one person, but could also be something like dancing in your living room. There are lots of ways to feel more embodied.

SV: I've found that I'm writing a lot about embodiment practices right here in the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*. I think it's the cutting edge of where we are going—integrating the wisdom of the now with the principles and practices of the past—the ones that have withstood the test of time. I really appreciate the work each of you is doing and how much care you obviously bring to it.

My hope is that people who have not had success in traditional talk therapy, where it didn't meet their needs for whatever reason, will read this article and be open to trying out Sensorimotor Therapy or another type of somatic psychotherapy to get access to a deeper, more physical kind of healing.

Kintsugi and the Art of Mending the Broken Heart

By Laurel Decker Hogge

"You have to keep breaking your heart until it opens." — Rumi

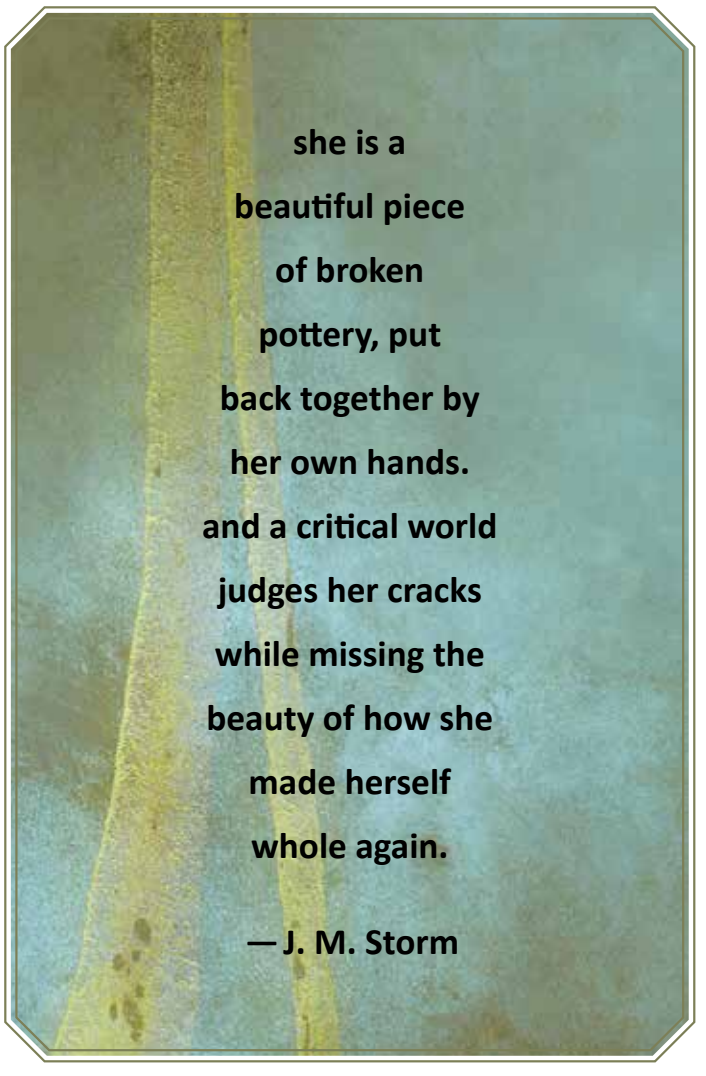
Try to remember a time you held something fragile in your hands. You were so careful not to damage it by holding too tightly, but your grip had to be firm enough to keep it secure. Now, imagine that in the next moment it slips from your fingertips and falls to the ground in slow motion. You know that whether you swipe at it or stand in frozen disbelief, the end result is the same. You are left gaping at the broken pieces and wishing you could take back the last three seconds.

Maybe this has happened to you before. If it was something very precious, it may have taken a while to recover from the realization that, even with all your care, you could not keep it safe. Did you find it difficult to accept that it would never be whole again?

I believe we all have this experience in a figurative way many times throughout our lives. At times, it is the experience of watching someone we love in their own breaking that sends our hearts into its own helpless free fall, or the unexpected tumble from romantic rejection that breaks our precious heart vessels. Powerful soul lessons can be learned in this vulnerable state if we see our hearts as broken open rather than broken apart.

The Japanese art known as *kintsugi*, or "golden joinery," is a process of using gold epoxy to mend the cracks in broken pottery. Depending on the piece, and the severity of its damage, this time-consuming process requires patience, commitment, skill, and focus to complete. It's a beautiful testament that a vessel does not lose its worth once broken—rather, the golden threads reconnecting the broken parts enhance the vessel's value. The pottery's purpose has expanded to include an aesthetic reverence for recovery.

The pottery's purpose has expanded to include an aesthetic reverence for recovery.



As we become more aware that breaking is a major part of the soul expansion process, we find beauty in healing. Just like the skilled kintsugi artist, we select and master tools for mending. I find that therapy, yoga, meditation, and self-care are my most essential wellness tools. It's up to each of us to discover which approach is most effective in our own healing. Just remember that depending on the size and volume of the cracks, the mending process can take a lot of time and focus. The good news is that practice makes us more skilled at this craft of personal healing.

Powerful soul lessons can be learned in this vulnerable state if we see our hearts as broken open rather than broken apart.

An optimistic take on this breaking doesn't make it any less painful. When we break—whether it's the slit of a paper cut or a fractured bone—we feel pain, and pain demands attention. Even if you're one of those tough people who can "walk it off," or ignore the sensation until it's gone, you still have to manage the pain.

I'm not one who can wave off any sensation—emotional or physical. I feel all the things, and I feel them deeply. If that resonates with you, it's possible that you are one of the small number of humans described by Dr. Elaine Aron as highly sensitive in her book, *The Highly Sensitive Person*.

Throughout my life, I struggled with each breaking experience, as well as the fear of impending impacts, so much so that I eventually took prescription medication for relief from anxiety. It was in my fourth year of college that I had my first panic attack. Crouched in the shower to cry and catch my breath, I blew it off as an isolated incident. All in one week: final exams, an apartment check to determine if I could keep my deposit, and meeting the future in-laws for the first time. It was a weird experience, but it made sense.

With my first pregnancy, I prepared for motherhood by reading everything I could find that might help me be the best mom possible. I made plans to breastfeed, knowing that studies had proven its great health benefits. It was only moments after delivery that I was told my son wouldn't be able to latch properly. The lactation specialist explained the challenge ahead of us, handed me a pamphlet, and recommended that I buy a list of equipment to help me do what I had assumed would be one of the easiest and most natural aspects of motherhood. As a new mom, I went into a downward spiral after an anxious, sleepless, and painful three weeks only to realize I could not be mentally well and a successful breastfeeding mother at the same time.

Though I felt driven to have a big family, my need for control made motherhood a great challenge for my mental well-being. As any parent will tell you, there are a lot of unpredictable variables with children. I felt like I would conquer one obstacle only to have another obstacle emerge, and I was gradually becoming more and more emotionally fragile. I lived in fear of each breaking experience, as well as the fear of impending impacts. With my second pregnancy, I knew what to expect, and I breastfed my second baby for over a year. But not long after weaning him, we took an unexpected midnight trip to the hospital where my three-year-old was diagnosed with

Type 1 Diabetes. I taught a child to be brave through all the shots and hospital visits, all while a perpetual concern for his life settled into my chest.

The physical and emotional toll was adding up, but at this time I wasn't equipped with tools that might have helped me repair. I eventually took prescription medication for relief from anxiety. To meet the demands of one, then two, then three, then four children—one medicine served to prevent breakdowns while another was a quick fix when I still couldn't keep it together.

As we become more aware that breaking is a major part of the soul expansion process, we find beauty in healing.

It was over a decade later, when I was at my lowest point, that even medication couldn't help me. When my husband and I made the choice to leave the fundamental religion we had lived since childhood—the force that brought us together at a freshman orientation party at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Losing faith was a confusing loss. We knew we had made the right decision to distance ourselves from the teachings of the church, but we were unprepared for how that would impact us. We grew apart as we dealt with our grief in different and unhealthy ways.

With a heart in mourning, and a marriage in crisis, I began therapy and yoga even though I felt very little will to keep living. Progress toward emotional stability was slow at first. It was discouraging and painful most of the time, but I knew I was healing. I began to enjoy the work as I realized it was leading me back to a feeling of being whole again. And more importantly, a more resilient and purposeful version of myself was emerging. Over time, I learned the beautiful lesson that breaking is a major part of the process of soul expansion. This knowledge changed my perspective from "Oh no, I'm breaking apart," to "I am grateful to break open and expand again."

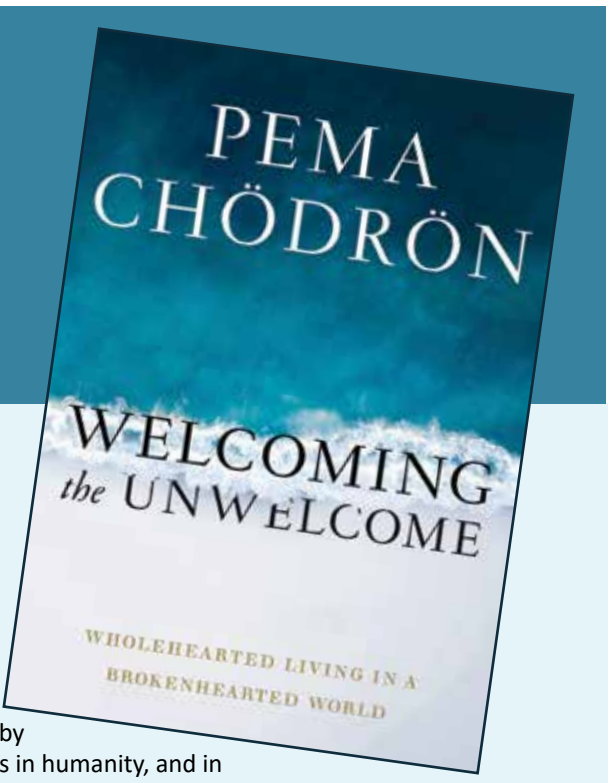
An optimistic take on this breaking doesn't make it any less painful.

By taking part in the work of mending your own heart vessel, you can spend less time suffering and more time exploring the sensations and their purpose. Each time you work your way through a difficult experience, you will become more resilient and less brittle upon impact. I encourage you to take the time to heal with intention, with trust in the process, and patience to stay the course. You can heal and reunite your broken parts. Cherish the lessons learned when you look back on the experience — like running your fingers along the golden seams that run throughout your broken open vessel.

Laurel Decker Hogge is a yoga instructor, artist, and wellness guide in Brighton. Laurel is passionate about helping others connect with their own intuition to live with focus and purpose. You can find out more at laurelwellness.org.

Book Review

WELCOMING THE UNWELCOME: WHOLEHEARTED LIVING IN A BROKENHEARTED WORLD



By Catherine Carlson

Whether you are new to Pema Chodron's work, or you are already a fan, *Welcoming The Unwelcome: Wholehearted Living in a Brokenhearted World,* her first work in over seven years, is incredibly timely and sounds like a kind of mantra for 2020, or perhaps the entire decade. It seems either on a global scale, or a smaller more personal one, each and every one of us has something on our doorstep we would rather not let inside. Yet, allowing what we don't desire to enter is precisely what we must do. As Chodron points out, it isn't going anywhere.

ALLOWING WHAT WE DON'T DESIRE TO ENTER IS PRECISELY WHAT WE MUST DO.

Chodron is a Buddhist nun and as much a student as a teacher. She shares her wisdom for handling difficult circumstances that she has learned from her many years immersed in the Buddhist practices—from other wonderful teachers, students, friends, and her own family. She has a lively story to go with every technique for embracing what is uncomfortable.

Chodron says those of us who are drawn to this book are most likely motivated by *Bodhichitta:* The Awakened Heart. That is, we wish to embody the teachings in this book for our own well-being but also to help others. Bodhichitta begins by becoming free of what's in the way of helping others and requires commitment.

Having a broken heart, as it turns out, is the ideal place to start—contrary to Western culture, which makes it seem as though we must have it all together in order to handle all that comes. According to Chodron, it is the cracks in our emotional center that help us grow stronger in our ability to manage more of what life throws at us. Much of it involves acceptance (which is not the same as liking!) and adapting to what is, using tools and practices, versus fixing and altering.

Chodron addresses what, to her, is the most challenging unwelcome aspect—the polarization we have seen in our current world. She says our concepts and fixations are what bring about "us and them" division and prevent us from fully being there for others. She relates a time of being stuck on labeling her own mother as a hypochondriac. Her mother's friend had a completely different view of her, which ended up changing Chodron's mind. Freeing ourselves from labels is one path to Bodhichitta.

BODHICHITTA BEGINS BY BECOMING FREE OF WHAT'S IN THE WAY OF HELPING OTHERS AND REQUIRES COMMITMENT.

The term "Basic Goodness" is an anchor throughout the book. One of the most touching stories is from a prisoner friend who has learned to see the basic goodness in his fellow prisoners, and by sharing his observation, we see it, too. It's not always easy, but by trusting in the basic goodness in humanity, and in ourselves, we make society stronger and more resilient.

There is a section devoted to the unwelcome shock that comes when your entire world changes in an instant, as in a sudden event or revelation. When your bubble bursts, connecting to the feelings of meaninglessness that follows gives us wisdom. We also become familiar with emptiness, which she says, is an "experience to cultivate rather than avoid." She also gives a simple and fascinating exercise she has cultivated to help lessen the fear of death.

HAVING A BROKEN HEART, AS IT TURNS OUT, IS THE IDEAL PLACE TO START—CONTRARY TO WESTERN CULTURE WHICH MAKES IT SEEM AS THOUGH WE MUST HAVE IT ALL TOGETHER IN ORDER TO HANDLE ALL THAT COMES.

When the going gets tough, we may all take refuge in things like Netflix or food, which, Chodron says, is perfectly fine sometimes. It's cultivating the ability to go outside that comfort zone into the place of risk, which builds our resilience. She says, "As you build up your Bodhichitta muscles, your attitude about adversity changes," and transformation slowly occurs.

Chodron's short chapters are easy to read, well crafted, and so loaded with insight they are worthy of at least a second read. Phrases like, "How we feel about ourselves will determine the future of the world," are deep. The core message of the book is "waking up for others—it is we who have to change." But, "in order to wake up we have to stop struggling with reality." *Welcoming The Unwelcome: Wholehearted Living in a Brokenhearted World* is the equivalent of a personal flotation device in our lives when maybe you are struggling to keep swimming, feel completely underwater, or need to jump ship. Situations in our lives might not be desirable, but tools for coping are available.

Catherine Carlson grew up in Ann Arbor and returned in 2014 to raise her family after many years living on both coasts. Her professional interests include aurasoma, astrology, and writing.

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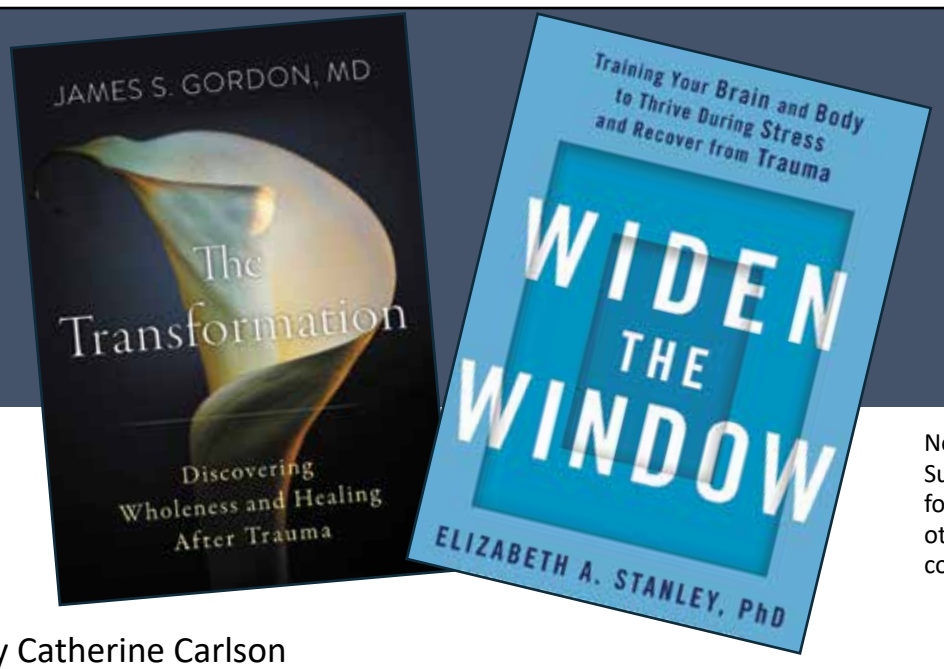
Book Review

TWO PATHWAYS TO HEALING TRAUMA



By Catherine Carlson

Trauma sounds like a word that applies to someone that has been wounded by a war or an epic tragedy, but it applies to so many more situations. Even someone that has experienced rejection or has lost a loved one can suffer from trauma. Two new releases address trauma, its effects, and tools for recovery. The first is titled *The Transformation: Discovering Wholeness and Healing After Trauma* by James S. Gordon, MD, and the second is *Widen the Window: Training Your Brain and Body to Thrive During Stress and Recover from Trauma* by Elizabeth A. Stanley, PhD. Each text approaches trauma in a unique way and demonstrates a successful program that the author has developed. Coincidentally, both authors have degrees from Harvard and teach at Georgetown University, though neither refers to the other's work in their respective books.

The Transformation is a book born out of Dr. Gordon's well-known and widely used program for healing psychological trauma as the founder and executive director of The Center for Mind-Body Medicine. His work (which took root early in his career) as a psychologist and researcher at the National Institute of Health, has expanded to include people, and facilitators, all over the world. In his words, "Trauma comes, sooner or later, to all of us." The program Gordon has developed is found in his book along with many real-world examples of transformation and healing. His program includes a series of internal processes. There is a circular process of relaxation, awareness, and expression that encompasses types of breathing, meditation, drawing, and movement. And there are visualization techniques for you to access an imaginary safe place and contact a wise guide, even during times of great stress.

GORDON GIVES A 5-STAGE PROCESS TO TAME TRIGGERS—THOSE MOMENTS THAT "SHIFT OUR FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT RESPONSE INTO HIGH GEAR."

Gordon gives a 5-stage process to tame triggers—those moments that "shift our fight-or-flight response into high gear." He shares a story of a woman, long divorced, that became good friends with her ex-husband. Several days before they were going to have dinner together, he asked if he could have a few of his old books back. When he arrived and requested the books, she exploded, even though they broke up 25 years prior. Present triggers *feel* like past trauma, which can perpetuate behavior that seems out of context.

And then there are the external factors that help such as "trauma-healing" friends and animals. Gordon always asks his patients, "Who makes you feel better?" Those people or pets are vital to healing. There is a chapter on humor and a chapter on diet, which Dr. Gordon says is typically the least addressed component of healing trauma, though it has been shown to cause damage to the digestive tract. He says comfort foods lower stress in the short run, but increase it in the long run and offers a list of supplements for stress relief.

Other unique important tools in the book include a special type of breathing used by shamans, dialoguing with body parts, and one I found really intriguing, creating a genogram—a multi-generational diagram of your family (instructions are provided). A genogram is a very effective way to access the past by giving someone a visual of their family and the historical trauma that may have occurred. Being able to see patterns on paper of illness or conflict as well as connection gives a broader perspective of your lineage and the wisdom to understand your own personal trauma.

A GENOGRAM IS A VERY EFFECTIVE WAY TO ACCESS THE PAST BY GIVING SOMEONE A VISUAL OF THEIR FAMILY AND THE HISTORICAL TRAUMA THAT MAY HAVE OCCURRED.

Later in the book, Gordon invites the reader to join either an in-person or virtual Mind-Body Skills Group, led by one of the six thousand people CMBM has trained—from Gaza to the Midwest. He shares amazing examples of what transpires in these groups, such as a woman whose genogram helps her understand why she worries so much. There she finds a tragic ending to her great-grandfather's life that left a legacy of worried offspring. She is also encouraged to look to the genogram for someone to help her and she finds it.

Near the end of the book is a chapter called "Love, Meaning, and Purpose." Survivors indicate these are vital to healing, and all of Gordon's techniques lay the foundations for this. He also gives next steps and an appendix of places to find other help. This written culmination of Gordon's career spanning 50 years is a comprehensive guide and workbook for healing trauma.

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In *Widen the Window,* author Elizabeth Stanley comes to her subject through her own personal experience. As an extremely driven type-A personality, Stanley was "stuck on high" for years, coping with chronic stress and trauma when she lost her eyesight. Eventually she regained her sight, the clarity to heal herself, and later developed MMFT: *Mindfulness-based Mind Fitness Training*, a resilience program which she has taught to military groups, civilians, and students at Georgetown University. The goal of MMFT is to "access agency" in every traumatic situation and build a supportive relationship between our thinking brain and our survival brain. By doing this we will effectively *Widen the Window*—referring to the window of tolerance to stress. Ideally, then a person can function better within that larger zone or window.

THE GOAL OF MMFT IS TO "ACCESS AGENCY" IN EVERY TRAUMATIC SITUATION AND BUILD A SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR THINKING BRAIN AND OUR SURVIVAL BRAIN.

Stanley's well-researched hefty text is divided into three parts. She gives examples of stress and trauma and cites a litany of reasons why our culture is so traumatized—we wear stress like a "badge of honor." An interesting piece of data is that our thinking brains often judge our life situations as insignificant, when our mind-body system is telling us another story. Another key point is that "if we don't experience recovery from whatever our stress or trauma is, we eventually experience *dysregulation*." These are symptoms such as insomnia, depression, addictions, chronic pain, and migraines, to name a few, that show up when our systems are no longer functioning in balance.

Next, she covers the science behind her program proving how strongly neuroscience affects our structures. "Chronic stress leads to epigenetic changes in the immune system that result in chronic inflammation in the mind-body system." She also points out that even though they sound very different, our bodies experience both stress and trauma quite similarly.

EVEN THOUGH THEY SOUND VERY DIFFERENT, OUR BODIES EXPERIENCE BOTH STRESS AND TRAUMA QUITE SIMILARLY.

Stanley says popular mindfulness exercises alone may backfire for people with narrow(ed) windows because it exacerbates the nervous system instead of balancing it. An example is when mindfulness exercises were used among marines. Even those that were diligent with their practice felt like they "were going to jump out of their skin" after several minutes. MMFT was designed with this in mind.

Finally, Stanley outlines the MMFT program, typically taught in an 8-week course or week-long intensive. The three parts blend (1) mindfulness skills training with (2) body-based self-regulation skills and (3) apply these to real life. The exercises seek to enhance the attention on a target while maintaining tolerance during a challenging experience. MMFT also cultivates the qualities of wisdom and courage, control and tolerance found in warrior traditions such as martial arts. Warriors in these lineages are able to "keep awareness, self-regulation, and ethical action, regardless of the situation."

Stanley includes two of the safest Mind Fitness exercises in the appendix of the book, and expands on strategies for them that are not usually included in her classroom training. The exercises are simple, and when done regularly, desired effects can be achieved. A U.S. Army Veteran, Stanley closes with a military saying. "When the enemy is unknown, you need a bigger reserve." Hence the need for a wider window to address what may have already occurred or what is to come, both personally and as a collective.

Both *The Transformation* and *Widen the Window* are exceptional books loaded with worthy content. Both programs have documented proven results, and we are fortunate that the authors have made their work accessible to all.
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